

spare Rib



Racism hits home:
Asian women speak out
Compulsive Eating: The Feelings behind the Fat
The Art of Paula Modersohn-Becker (see page 14)
Cardiff Special
Help Yourself to pleasure

STRAIGHT MUSIC PRESENTS



PATTI SMITH

AND HER GROUP

WITH GUESTS **THE STRANGLERS**

HAMMERSMITH ODEON

QUEEN CAROLINE ST.W.6

FRI/SAT ~ 22nd/23rd OCTOBER at ~7-30 p.m

TICKETS £2.50, £2.00, £1.50, (INC.VAT) ADVANCE THEATRE BOX OFFICE 748 4081, LONDON THEATRE BOOKINGS, SHAFTESBURY AVE., 439 3371, PREMIER BOX OFFICE, 240 2245, USUAL AGENTS OR ON NIGHT

ODEON BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET SUNDAY 24th OCTOBER at ~7-30 p.m

TICKETS £2.00, £1.50, £1.00, (INC.VAT) ADVANCE THEATRE BOX OFF.
10-30 a.m - 8-00 p.m, MON-SAT. TEL. 021 6436101, OR ON NIGHT

FREE TRADE HALL

PETER ST., MANCHESTER 2

THURSDAY 28th OCTOBER at ~7-30 p.m

TICKETS £2.00, £1.50, £1.00, (INC.VAT) AVAILABLE DAWSONS: STOCKPORT & WARRINGTON, CENTRAL RECORDS: MIDDLETON & ASHTON under LYNE, FREE TRADE HALL BOX OFFICE 834 0943, OR ON NIGHT

ODEON EDINBURGH

CLERK ST.

FRIDAY 29th OCTOBER at ~7-30 p.m

TICKETS £2.00, £1.50, £1.00, (INC.VAT) ADVANCE THEATRE BOX OFF. 12-00 p.m - 7-00 p.m,
MON-SAT, TEL. 667 3805, OR ON NIGHT

spare Rib

November 1976

Cover Women leaving a North London factory photographed by Michael Ann Mullen

- Letters* 4 Raising the Roof, Fun Films and more
- Psychology* 6 **Fat: a feminist issue** – why do we starve and stuff ourselves? Susie Orbach, co-founder of the London Women's Therapy Centre, talks to Rozsika Parker about compulsive eating.
- Feature* 10 **'It's not like Asian ladies to answer back'** Amrit Wilson reports on racism as it affects the everyday life of Asian communities in Blackburn, Bradford and London.
- On the Road* 14 What are women in Cardiff doing?
- Sex* 16 **Earthly Delights** How one woman learned to please herself
- News* 17 **Three women take over Manchester's Moss Side Press** – "we still have to print the odd sexist cartoon"
- 18 Trico strikers turn down extra 50p
- 20 What happened at the TUC
- 22 Are kerb-crawlers more sensitive than prostitutes?
- 26 Marching through Ireland – peace at what price?
- 28 Abortion in Columbia; torture in Spain
- Shortlist* 24 Things to do, services and arts
- Classifieds* 30 Accommodation, courses, jobs, therapy, personal
- Arts* 33 **'I work with such passion that it shuts out everything else'** Gillian Perry tells the story of painter Paula Modersohn-Becker on the centenary of her birth
- Feature* 36 **Three Battered Women Face the Future** Women's Aid Refuges provided a brief haven for Agnes, Chris and Jenny. Now they face the world outside again, but from a new angle. By Stephanie Markman
- 39 **Tooth and Nail** More sexist trash to attack
- Reviews* 40 **Books** Angela Carter on Charlotte Woolf's *'An Older Love'*, *'Women of Photography'* and *Naturebirth* and a mixed bunch for children
- Film** *Mother Jugs and Speed* – easy victory for Raquel Welch
- Theatre** *Who killed Fish?* The opening of the Scottish Women's Company. And, *Son of a Gun*
- Fiction* 44 **O.U.T. Spells Out** by Stef Pixner
- Children* 46 Compiled by Alison Fell and Wisty Hoyland
- Subscription* 47 **'Trick or Treat?'**

Spare Rib is produced collectively by Rose Ades, Anny Brackx, Alison Fell, Victoria Green, Wisty Hoyland, Susan Lambert, Laura Margolis, Jill Nicholls, Rozsika Parker, Linda Phillips, Jane Prince, Eleanor Stephens.

Please send a stamped addressed envelope with all unsolicited manuscripts and letters if you want an acknowledgement. Spare Rib cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of manuscripts.

Copyright here and abroad in all news, feature articles and photographs is held jointly by Spare Ribs Ltd and the author. Reproduction in whole or in part of any article is forbidden without the express permission of Spare Ribs Ltd and the author.

Spare Rib is published by Spare Ribs Ltd, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS. Telephone 01-437 2070. Printed by Carlisle Web Offset Ltd, Newton Trading Estate, Carlisle CA2 7NR. Typesetting by Finsbury Park Typesetters Ltd, 11 Goodwin Street, Finsbury Park, London N4 3HQ. Distributed by Moore Harness Ltd, 31 Corsica Street, London N5.

ISBN 0306 7971

Do-gooders in the Jungle
Dear *Spare Rib*,
Your campaign to launch *Spare Rib* in Birmingham may be well-intentioned, but you remind me of the Victorian Do-gooders who dashed off into the jungle.

Reading that I live in a 'Black Spot' makes me feel a little angry and a little uncivilised. Just because women here do not buy *Spare Rib*, it does not mean that they are being pulled into caves by their hair.

Still, you do a good job and I'll keep reading and agitating, in my own small way.

Yours,
A native of Brum!

Daughter of a Lesbian

Dear *Spare Rib*,
The plight of lesbian mother, and their fight to have custody of their children as reported by Eleanor Stephens (*Spare Rib* 50) is absolutely soul destroying for the parent and the child. I am sixteen, and the daughter of a lesbian mother, and we have been extremely lucky in that when my parents split up ten years ago, my father accepted my mother's lesbianism and made no attempt to remove my sister and myself from her care.

It makes me seethe with anger to read about the naive comments of 'normal' judges and magistrates in these cases, who condemn homosexual love as a 'perversion', an 'affliction' and a 'personality difficulty'.

To say that living with a lesbian parent is an embarrassment is, at least for me, totally nonsensical. One learns to cope with situations in different ways, and this situation has been no more difficult for me than any other minor problems one meets in everyday life. I have my own close friends of both sexes and they must accept that my mother's life is her own affair, and my sexuality is mine. All I have ever had from my mother is love, care, and understanding, and, contrary to the popular thought, the dreaded disease of lesbianism is not necessarily catching!

However, I am accepting of this part of life and realise that in the future I too may experience this type of love as well as others. I realise also that I am one of the luckiest people in the world to have had a mother who loves me, making me thus capable of love. So I find it tickening that the judges and courts of this country have the power to demand that others like me be deprived of what I have been so freely given by my mother and her co-habitant (whom I also love very dearly) simply to uphold their status quo.
Love,
M.T.,
London.

Savage Indictment

Dear *Spare Rib*,
Eleanor Stephens' article on discrimination against lesbian mothers in custody battles (*Spare Rib* 50) is a savage indictment of the way our society reacts to and further alienates women who refuse to conform to some spurious sexual 'norm'.

The myth so widely accepted that lesbians are child molesters has got to be dispelled. I have two children and although I have had problems with male heterosexual acquaintances approaching my daughter — aged nine — there has never been any problems with my gay acquaintances of either sex regarding either child. As a teacher it's quite common for teenage girls to tell me of advances that friends of the family, uncles, even fathers, have made towards them.

I hope that John (see article) will be quickly reunited with his mother. How disastrous it would be if he too is handed on from one au pair to another as mentioned elsewhere. It reminds me of the double agony caused both to prisoners and their families when either parent is 'put away'.
Best wishes,
Fiona Green,
London W1.

A Fun Film?

Dear *Spare Rib*,
I am writing to express my amazement with Ms Parker's negative review of Anja Brien's film "Wives" (*Spare Rib* 50).

To me it was a positive film. I came out of it feeling positive because I had experienced three women who were actively trying to tackle and confront themselves — without using feminist rhetoric. It is the first film I have seen portraying women as positive objects for identification. I can compare this film with "Summerdreams Winterwishes" and "Legacy", both American films about depressed, suicide-prone middle class housewives. I left these films feeling hopeless and subdued. "Wives" on the contrary presents an alternative.

It shows women who can laugh together, play together, be together. At the same time the film does not ignore the envy, the bitchyness and the suspicion between the women, but it doesn't take over the film. Neither does the brittle loyalty between these three women end with a non-committal recognition that "we are all in the same boat" sort of feeling. It goes beyond this. One of the women, Heidrun, who is a chocolate factory worker, had organised a strike against an unfair dismissal of another female worker. In the review Ms Parker feels that the film falls flat on its

face as it doesn't acknowledge that women are organising. Maybe from a middle class feminist point of view this is not the "right" sort of organising.

"Wives" portrays women as women. Sure, they clear up after the meal, they don't play the way men and children play. They play the way women have learnt to play. In a quiet, shy and giggly way. I don't find this way of playing less worthy than let's say, rugby or motor-racing.

Ms Parker says the film is sad. The film shows women with potential as women, not trying to be men. I don't find this sad.
In sisterhood,
Viveka Nyberg.

Viveka Nyberg is right, I neglected the humorous, hopeful aspect of Wives. But I didn't say it fell flat on its face, in fact I said it remained "up in the air". The reference to Heidrun's past activism seemed a bit token in the context of the film — it was certainly not connected to the women's lives. Neither was I intending to devalue the women's way of enjoying themselves, in fact I was trying to say that they only appeared to have a good time once they

1908 SUFFRAGE POSTER IN COLOUR

£1 (UK & seamail)



First published by The Brighton and Hove Women's Franchise Society in 1908.

Send cash, PO's, cheques to:
Spare Rib Posters,
27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.
Make out cheques to Spare Ribs Ltd.

NAME

ADDRESS

abandoned traditional male ways and means.

Saddled with Guilt

Dear *Spare Rib*,
Whilst wholeheartedly supporting the demand for 24-hour childcare facilities to enable parents of either sex to participate in activities outside the home, the article 'Babysitting ... A very Private Problem' in issue 51, which describes some of the problems parents face when arranging care for their children in their absence, contains some disturbing implications for feminists. Michelene Wandor expresses a fairly common, if not misplaced, resentment felt by many mothers active in the Women's Movement —

'How do we tackle those people mainly men, but boy oh bloody boy, almost every childless feminist, who say they do not want to baby-sit, many are scared of kids, don't know anything about them ... don't want to 'give-up' an evening ... and what does that imply about their view of kids?' (p8)
The insinuation is that a genuine desire not to baby-sit is taken as a deep-seated maladjustment to children. This has a familiar ring to it — not only

are we to feel guilty about not having children in the first place, we are now saddled with the guilt of being selfish for not wanting to babysit, i.e. the 'Wandor' complex. Mich-elene Wandor, and others who argue like her, have to understand that until the decision to become a parent is one which is taken collectively, then it is both unreasonable and moralistic to expect the responsibilities of parenthood to be shared with others of right, who were not, incidentally, party to the original decision. As a group, parents have no rights vis a vis the childless on the issue of childcare in this society. Hopefully, many of these problems would be eliminated in a different kind of society — a society in which collective decisions had a material force in the community — although this is by no means an automatic gain. Nevertheless, unless the problem is located correctly, that is, at the level of social relations, and not in the guise of guilt-inducing and vitriolic attacks on individuals, then the chances of conducting an effective struggle in the future remain slight.

I would have much preferred some discussion of the underlying assumption throughout the article, that children need an adult permanently standing by at all times of the day and night. It seems to me that people are in as much need of liberation from the tyranny of clinging and dependent children as they are of oppressive social structures. In Sisterhood, Julie Sheppard Leeds 6.

Aim Higher than Wages

Dear Spare Rib,
I fail to see that the demand of wages for housework does anything to further the liberation of women.

It was argued in *Spare Rib* 50 that 'money is power', and therefore a necessary prerequisite for women to obtain greater autonomy within the marriage situation. Agreed, money is power, but what is meant by power — the ability to control and manipulate? I get the impression that Ms Hall is trying to switch women from the role of the oppressed, only into that of the oppressor — hardly a step forward. Money may mean power in terms of our social system, but surely not within personal relationships, where power stemming from psychological strength is required. Personal autonomy may change the degree of oppression, but not the forces that create it.

I think a wages for housework demand underestimates the dimensions of the problem. The capitalist system is completely interdependent with

the existing molecular family structure. It relies on the fact that the majority of women maintain a supportive role in the home while their spouses can direct their efforts to the forces of production. A demand for wages implies that this division is acceptable, and that financial reward is sufficient compensation.

It also assumes the nihilistic work ethic of capitalism, which accepts that a weekly wage (or monthly salary) is enough justification for the continual wastage of human potential in fruitless and alienating occupations. For a woman who resents housework, money is not a compensation. A more meaningful compensation might be gained from a reformed life-style, an additional occupation which is rewarding, wider social relationships, solidarity with other women to organise autonomous creche or group facilities.

Finally, aren't we institutionalised enough already? The state has already formalised the role of the housewife by excluding her from unemployment benefit and defining her as a dependent within the tax system. Surely, a wage from the state would only entrench her even more firmly in this position.

For women looking for real autonomy, wages for housework isn't enough — we've got to aim far higher!

Yours sincerely,
(Ms) Gerrie Ellis,
London W1.

Puzzled

Dear Spare Rib,
The one thing that puzzles me about the idea of Wages-for-Housework is this: where will the money come from? Not from the State which doesn't have a penny of its own; the only money the State has to give away is taxpayers' money.

And if that's what the movement's members have in mind, I am even more puzzled. Take the average couple of working husband and working wife, both paying taxes and bringing up their family. Why should their taxes subsidise wages-for-housework for another woman in a similar family set-up? Or are we all going to pay a little more tax with one hand and get back a little (a little less, probably) with the other hand — wages-for-housework? Worse still, why should the above-mentioned average working couple subsidise a married woman who chooses to stay at home and bring up her children? It doesn't make sense. But perhaps I missed out some important point. Will someone please explain?

Sincerely,
B. Bishop,
London.

50% of the Work Force

Dear Spare Rib,
I enjoyed your article on posters (*Spare Rib* 50) but I must object to the Tolmer's Poster Collective poster's caption which read: 'We are 40% of the workforce'.

It should read: 'We are 50% of the workforce', or don't you count housework as work either?!

Sincerely,
Paula Smith,
Bucks.

Trying Hard to be Correct

Dear Spare Rib,

I think there's a slight error of emphasis in Eleanor Stephens' reply to Poppy Rice, Hull (*Spare Rib* 50). Eleanor doesn't agree that she should have "presented lesbian lovemaking as an 'alternative' solution to these difficulties", i.e. in relating to men on an equal basis. I suspect that lesbian sex is the alternative to sexual role-playing at the moment; in a different kind of society, where homosexuality isn't a 'problem' and heterosexuality is less problematic, this will hopefully not be true. An alternative isn't necessarily a solution; and by juxtaposing these two words Eleanor confuses the issue a little. Also, let's not be too precious about women fancying each other. Our sexuality is not as consistently politically conscious as the phrase "the seriousness of a woman's decision to enter into a sexual relationship with another woman" would suggest. Nor do I think we can make one-to-one comparisons between forms of sexuality in a society which acknowledges only one. Freud is rather more shrewd on this subject than I am.

Meanwhile, on to the necessary question of Heraworship. I suggest your readers take note of the complete inadequacy of S de Beauvoir's presentation of lesbianism in 'The Second Sex'. There is a useful companion volume to such a study in Mao Tse-tung, 'Oppose Book Worship'.

Is Hero-worship OK or is that out too?

Trying hard to be correct,
Ann Scott,
London N19.

Bribery to encourage marriage

★ Dear Spare Rib,
As one of the many single women who read *Spare Rib* I feel I must comment on the article 'Are Widow's Single' in *Spare Rib* 50.

The idea that widow's should be given preferential treatment over single women goes to the heart of the ideas behind the Women's Movement. To give widow's special treatment — firstly, to do this reinforces the institution of

marriage — why should anyone receive extra money just because they have complied with society's image of what is good and conventional behaviour? And why should those who choose not to conform pay extra tax to support those who have married? This also reinforces the belief that women are men's dependents and that they will be unable to support themselves without a man. It is yet another bribery to encourage marriage.

Women will only become liberated when they cease to rely on men for an income and demand equal pay and nursery facilities so that they can be independent even during marriage.

Yours,
Linda Green,
Salford.

Time to raise the roof

Dear Spare Rib,

I have just come face to face with a most blatant piece of sexual discrimination and I am amazed that the women's movement haven't raised the roof over the issue.

Recently, it was necessary for me, for the first time, to claim unemployment benefit. Throughout six years of working I have always chosen to pay a full national insurance contribution whether married or single, rather than the reduced stamp for married women.

I now find, to my anger and dismay, that in spite of this I am not entitled to full benefit; a mere £7.80 instead of £11. This is because, as a married woman, I am expected to be dependent on my husband. On £7 a week I am being forced into this financial dependency. For many women it must also mean real poverty or complete subservience to the "head of the household".

How can we possibly nod approvingly at the recent Anti-Discrimination laws when this ruling makes a mockery of all of them. I urge everyone who reads this to make strong representations to their MP and anyone else they can think of, to shame the government into changing the existing social security regulations. Yours sincerely,
Suzanne Marshall,
London N8.

The cover of *Spare Rib* 50 was a posed photograph of women not involved in the lesbian custody cases mentioned.

★ Indicates that the letter has been cut for space reasons.

fat is a feminist issue

It's one or two in the morning, you creep to the kitchen, open the fridge, find the bread knife, hunt through the cupboard and you eat. You'll eat anything; cold, old potatoes, hunks of cheese, slices of bread and jam, peanut butter straight, with all the desperation of the deprived, constant dieter. But almost immediately you start to agonise over what you've done, despising yourself.

Society too has a poor view of the compulsive eater. Anorexia Nervosa, the other side of the coin which involves self starvation, is observed, analysed and treated. But the compulsive eater is usually dismissed as greedy and handed a diet sheet, or fobbed off with "it runs in the family", "it's just your age".

Susie Orbach who co-founded the Women's Therapy Centre in London has been studying compulsive eating from a feminist perspective for six years, running groups and workshops on it for women. She describes her theories to Rozsika Parker and explains how there can be light at the end of the tunnel for the compulsive eater.

Why did you start looking for ways to overcome compulsive eating problems?
It co-incided with my involvement in the Women's Movement when I realised that compulsive eating wasn't just an individual crisis for me. You know every Monday morning meaning a new diet and a new chance for life. I'd spend time when I was alone in tears, relieved either by a new time table for losing weight or by an elaborate binge.

It's hard to believe that you were ever a compulsive eater, for a start you seem in such harmony with your body.

I was marginally overweight — a stone or two. I wasn't enormous so I managed to pass within the culture and somehow do all the regular things we women were supposed to do in the fifties and sixties.

Then quite fortuitously, a woman at an alternative university called together a group on compulsive eating. Forty of us including Carol Munter (who worked with Susie) and myself, began to recount how our entire lives were focussed around dieting with hypnosis, pills — acupuncture wasn't in then — but with just about everything else. There seemed to be something fundamentally fucked up about the way people had tried to resolve the problem. We were setting ourselves up for a life of total imprisonment — we were always going to be on a diet.

So a small group formed to study the problem on two levels at once. We looked at the social basis — why we're supposed to be a certain size and what all that was about. And we looked at why we hadn't been able to conform to that image, although we'd spent ten or fifteen years dieting, losing and gaining about a ton of weight between us.

We began to think that being fat, instead of being a purely negative attribute, was a very definite and purposeful act — a conscious or unconscious way of saying something about our lives.

You decided that being fat must be doing something positive for you? I find that really hard to accept.

I didn't say that it's positive — it's very painful. But I try to look at what superficially seem to be really uncomfortable ways of coping with one's life, as in fact ways of working out one's life. Adaptations aren't as negative as they look, though the positives aren't apparent and are very hard to come to terms with.

Usually being fat is seen purely negatively as a lack of self control, self indulgence, self destruction...

No, fat is not about lack of self control. Fat is about protection, sex, nurturance, strength, boundaries, mothering, substance, assertion and rage. Fat is a social disease. It is a response to the inequality of the sexes.

Can you give some examples of the way becoming fat is a response to the demands and restrictions of women's role?

Fat expresses a rebellion against the powerlessness of women, of women having to look and be a certain way, of it being unacceptable for women to be assertive and confident. Look at the difficulty of being a teenage girl; not understanding the whole meat market syndrome, not understanding how you are supposed to behave, and feeling generally very insubstantial. The fat is somehow an attempt, even though it doesn't work, to take yourself out of that whole meat market place: "My fat says screw you to all who want me to be the perfect mother, sweetheart, maid whore. Take me for who I am, not for who I'm supposed to be. If you are really interested in me, you can wade through the layers and find out who I am."

Do you think that fat helps a woman to feel that she is being taken seriously because she experiences herself as big and strong?

Yes, many women hold onto their fat as a way to neutralize their sexuality in order to be taken seriously in their working lives. When they lose the weight they experience themselves being treated frivolously by their male and female colleagues: "When I'm fat, I feel I can hold my own. Whenever I get thin I feel like I'm treated like a doll who doesn't know which end is up."

Surely the fear of ostracism and rejection suffered by fat people outweighs any possible advantages?

If you accept the validity of the unconscious, you'll find a lot of complicated meanings in any particular expression of a person's life. A way to uncover the meanings fat has for a woman is through guided fantasy work. People often fantasize that they are at a party and at first it's ghastly when they are fat and terrific when they're thin. The second time they do the fantasy, it turns out they are delighted that men don't hassle them when they are fat. They can hold court and be quite confident about the outcome of any interaction because it's not going to be sexualised. Fat keeps relationships fairly circumscribed whereas thin opens up terrors: "Am I going to be asked to provide this, am I going to have to do that?" The fat in this particular situation is a way to say NO.

So it enables you to be independent and assertive beyond the bounds of accepted femininity.

But it's a fantasy that the fat, per se, is doing that for you. You've attributed powers to the fat that you yourself possess. You have to recognise and own up



"Fat is a social disease.
It is a response to
the inequality of the sexes."

to your own power.

I'm no longer overweight and have no compulsive eating problems today. And I've learned — and try to communicate to the people I work with on the problem — that I can go into a room and make sure that no-one comes near me, I don't need the fat to do it for me. Equally I can communicate that I want a lot of attention — and it can be non-sexual attention. So I'm owning the power I gave the fat.

I suppose it's safer to attribute power to your fat when you are in a precarious social and economic situation as someone's wife, mother, sister. Do you think that eating makes some women feel they exist in their own right — that fat gives them a sense of identity?

Yes. Women are brought up to transpose their need to receive into the capacity to give to others. A form of giving to yourself is through food, as a woman said to me, "I eat a lot because I'm always stoking myself up for the day's encounters. I look after my family, my mother, and any number of people who pass in and out of my day. I feel empty with all this giving, so I eat to fill the spaces and give myself sustenance to go on giving to the world."

And because we live through other people, we lose touch with where we begin and end. Eating all the time is an attempt to physically create a space around yourself, so that you're sure that here is where you are and there is where the world is. Paradoxically it blurs the distinction even more because women then feel non-defined: "I'm all fat, all big, all flab."

Yet feeding yourself, pleasing yourself, evokes tremendous guilt.

Yes, we don't know how to receive anything. Ironically, while the ideology of the Women's Movement is that we shouldn't be dependent, shouldn't be passive, in fact women have never been allowed to be dependent and receiving in the true sense of the word — as a male baby is. From very early on girls are expected to take care of others and to be their mother's mother. We may moan and groan about how we want to receive but in fact we are ill-equipped to do it.

In her book Little Girls Elena Gianini Belotti describes studies in Italy which showed that women actually breast fed girl babies significantly less than boys. Do you think that early deprivation contributes to women's compulsive eating? I don't know, we can only speculate on that. But the mother/daughter relationship, the primary feeding relationship, is going to be incredibly fraught and ambivalent. Different mother and daughter conflicts are played out around fat. For example, I hear these kind of comments from women I work with on compulsive eating: "My fat says to my mother, 'look at me, I'm in a mess, I don't know how to feed myself or how to take care of myself. You can still be my mother.'" Or, "My fat says to my mother, 'I'm substantial, I can protect myself, I can go out into the world.'"

When a girl gets fat, do you think she may also be trying to identify with the image of a mother, which has a sort of secure place in society?

Yes, if a child gets fat, it gets big like an adult — an adult who is powerful.

What about the theory that eating is displaced aggression?

Since anger and aggression are such unacceptable feelings for women, they may get "displaced". Most compulsive eaters experience themselves as having a space inside their bodies between them and the outside world — a place where feelings like loss, anger and pain can go. They are stuffed between the fat and you, and disowned.

Isn't the impulse to eat more to do with blocking anger and anxiety out, and achieving a sort of momentary oblivion? I think people experience food as they would any other narcotic. Compulsive eaters are always going "cold turkey", dieting or fasting, or trying their equivalent to methadone, cottage cheese. And while the junkie may spend hours hustling the money and connection for a fix, the compulsive eater will devote the same kind of psychic energy to figuring out what to eat.

If you've been through binges, you must know you can get narcotised. People say, "I ate myself into a coma."

There's an initial feeling of blocking out the world. But when people start working on the experience in therapy, they often realise that far from lasting a whole evening as they imagined, it lasts only about five minutes before self-hatred and recrimination sets in.

A vicious circle starts, doesn't it? You eat and eat to block out the self-hatred, or maybe to increase it to such a pitch that you have to "take yourself in hand" — start another diet.

Right, self-hatred is the crucial thing to work through if you want to stop being a food junkie. The goal of treatment is not weight loss but to break food addiction, however nothing works without some self acceptance. So when I say that people need to understand that fat has indeed served them well in some way, it's because it is a step towards not flagellating themselves. If they can understand that eating and being fat has some meaning for them or had some meaning that may not be useful any more, then they don't have to beat themselves all the time.

You've convinced me that fat has its uses for us, but I still can't go along with your theory that women are frightened of being thin.

I wouldn't be so convinced if I hadn't heard women say so often, "I'm petrified to be thin, I'm absolutely petrified," after we've been working in therapy for a time. A whole set of expectations goes along with being thin about what's supposed to come to you, what you're allowed to get, how you are supposed to be in the world: "If I'm thin, then I must be productive, energetic, together and loving."

I can believe that being fat is an excuse for failure. And if you feel "fat and hopeless", you've got an excuse not to push yourself, and not to risk facing defeat. But I still can't see that anyone could be frightened of thinness.

Well, how is it that every time a woman loses weight, it comes right back on? There are various reasons why a woman fears being thin. She may experience herself as a different person she doesn't know very well. She may experience herself as completely vulnerable and defenceless. And if the fat has provided a space for her feelings, she may experience herself as being too close to her feelings. While if she previously experienced the fat as concrete strength and substance, she may feel that she is no longer being taken seriously once she's thin.

How can these fears be overcome? You have to start accepting the physical aspect of being fat. Through working with a mirror, drawings and video,



"Dieting makes you lose touch with the experience of hunger and the ability to satisfy it because you eat according to a set of rules."

women actually start to experience ownership of their fat. They no longer have the experience of me-fat-world but of me-world. So when they begin to lose weight it isn't a question of losing a protective covering but, so to speak, compressing.

Could you describe how you use mirrors? Compulsive eaters have no idea what size they are. You use a full length mirror to learn where you begin and end, observing yourself as if you were a work of art or a vase, without judging yourself. If you say, "I can see nothing but these huge protruding breasts and vast thighs" other women in the compulsive eating group can say, "No, that isn't how you are at all."

Most people experience their fat as surrounding them, trailing them or even as not there. Slowly you learn to experience yourself as existing all through your body.

We also ask people to describe how they would present themselves if they were thin; how would they hold themselves, what would they wear? And we ask, "What's so unacceptable about looking, let's say, sexual if you are fat?" If you learn to do those things with the safety of the fat, you aren't terrified by the image you create when you eventually get thin.

You mean fat people are encouraged to break the rigid taboos imposed on them against dressing in horizontal stripes, bright colours?

Yes, but more importantly, compulsive eaters have three wardrobes; clothes that are too big, clothes that are too small and "carrot" clothes — inducement clothes. For me the most liberating thing was to throw out everything that didn't fit, so that I didn't go to my cupboard every day feeling there were three different Susies. There was only one and I had to deal with that fact.

The split the compulsive eater feels in herself is also between a Good person who starves herself and a Bad person who stuffs. How can that split be overcome? We try to unhook the physical state of fatness and thinness from other attributes, so they simply become statements about size. And instead of defining yourself as Bad when you overeat, you can begin to say, "I'm uncomfortable with this behaviour, I like this particular aspect of self, I don't like this." In other words, you begin to be a lot more generous towards yourself. Once you begin to recognize feelings of confidence here and feelings of insecurity there, then the times when you overeat don't dominate your definition of self.

But dieting provides, however briefly, a sense of achievement and satisfaction and there are few ways open for women to gain such sensations. How can it be given up?

It's not easy, right? The way out is to think of yourself as a normal eater. It's an enormous relief to feel that every Kit Kat doesn't have to be a reason for recrimination.

Dieting makes you lose touch with the experience of hunger and the ability to satisfy it because you eat according to a set of rules. And when you are not on a diet, you eat everything in sight against the fear of imminent deprivation.

You mean compulsive eaters don't recognize hunger pangs?

There are four kinds of eating familiar to compulsive eaters:- Nervous eating — "I just have to have something. What can I cram into my mouth?"

Mouth hunger — "I really need to put some food in my mouth though I don't feel hungry in my stomach."

Eating prophylactically — "I'm not hungry now but I might be in a couple of hours."

Deserved eating — "I had a ghastly day. I think I'll cheer myself up with a nice nosh."

I'd add celebratory eating — "I had such a great day, one Kit Kat can't

hurt me."

It probably wouldn't stop with one Kit Kat. The compulsive eater can eat a lot of food. But she often doesn't taste the three boxes of biscuits, ten celery stalks, packets of crisps and the frozen pizza that she can consume at one sitting. The food is eaten so guiltily that she doesn't really enjoy it. In fact the feeling of insatiability is so strong that the compulsive eater will cram seemingly unappetising foods into her mouth like dry cereal during a binge.

How do you start recognising stomach hunger — real hunger — when you are so out of touch with your needs?

It's not at all easy. The diet and fashion industries spend millions of pounds making sure that women don't decide for themselves what they would like to eat and wear.

And the experience of hunger can be quite scary. Some of the fear comes from an anxiety about your ability to satisfy your own bodily hunger: "If I'm not stuffing myself or starving, what should I do? How will I know how much to eat? Maybe I'll never want to stop." Another frightening factor is that feeding



"Fat is a way of saying no to powerlessness and self-denial."

yourself and satisfying yourself challenges the "female as child" concept. The idea of being able to take care of yourself, means seeing yourself as an adult, an aspect of female experience so denied by our culture.

This connects up to something we talked about earlier. When a compulsive eater sees herself as a thin, female, adult, then everything else in her life is supposed to hang together better. While this idea is a fantasy, it is nevertheless a scary one.

So if you experience difficulty in allowing yourself to feel hunger, pay attention to both the physical sensations in the body as well as the psychological factors that prevent you from hearing what your body might be wanting. The psychological issues might range from doubts about your ability to nurture yourself, to what it might mean to nurture yourself, Whose power might you be jeopardising if you could give to yourself?

Next month Susie will be talking about the work of a group of people with eating problems.

Much of this material will appear in Psychotherapy an APA journal.

Sex Discrimination...Equal Pay Act...Employment Protection Act

The Legislation is helpful, but

**THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE
FOR TRADE UNION ORGANISATION**

**All women workers
should be trade unionists**



Join TASS, the white collar union in engineering

TASS, ONSLOW HALL, LITTLE GREEN, RICHMOND, SURREY

"It's not like Asian ladies to answer back"

... said a personnel manager petulantly. Amrit Wilson reports on Asian reactions to racism in British institutions and British streets.

"In May and early June my life was a nightmare. I was frightened to go out. I tried to keep the children in. You hear of racial tension — it means staying at home, avoiding shopping, hoping your husband gets home safely," says Meenakshi Patel. "Since June things have quietened down a bit — things are getting back to 'normal'. So far we have been lucky, our family has not been attacked by racists. But all our other problems have grown. My husband was made redundant in June, my brother who works at Tate and Lyle faces redundancy and my sister-in-law just lost her job. One day she went to work and they told her that she had been dismissed. That's what this summer has been like."

Meenakshi lives in a crumbling terraced house in the East End of London. "Jobs were our main worry earlier this year," she says, "but when the racial violence reached its height that became our main fear." She is one of the Asian women who described to me her experience of this summer's events. I talked with women in areas of extreme racial violence — Newham, Bradford and Blackburn — to find out what they had been through.

EAST LONDON

'Just an ordinary evening'

Women had their saris set on fire three times in the shopping centre near Harold Street, Newham. White youths patrolling the parks attacked young Asians and set dogs on them. For women, venturing out was an ordeal and children's journeys to and from school a cause of intense worry, during May and June.

Paramjeet, a Sikh, said in mid-June, "I am frightened to let my son play outside. But I can't keep him in — it wouldn't be right. There is talk about black people, that they should be sent back. We have spent half our working life here, given our labour, we are here to stay that is certain. But if things go on like this it will affect us. If you don't feel happy, if you don't feel free to go out — specially for a child — what kind of life is that?"

Another woman, a few streets away, told me of her experiences. "It was just an ordinary evening. I had done all the cooking and I was waiting for my husband to come home. Suddenly I heard a loud scream and rushed to the front door. Half a dozen white teenagers were beating someone up. There was blood on the pavement. I couldn't see who it was at first, then I realised it was my husband. He was unconscious on the ground, they were kicking and beating him. I screamed for help. The neighbours rushed out and we beat off

BRADFORD

'When someone has to go they always pick the black faces'

If you exclude the pompous municipal buildings and smart middle class suburbs, Bradford is a town of grime and decay. Asians have been used as scapegoats for all the town's ills. Although as one white resident told me, "Bradford has always been a dump — lately it has got better if anything."

In Lumb Lane, an almost entirely Pakistani area where the National Front held a rally under heavy police protection in June, Mr. Hakim Rana, a retired bakery worker, told me, "It was we immigrants who brought Bradford back to life. We worked in the foundries, textiles, the health and transport services. We put the economy

Anti-National Front demonstration in Bradford, 24th April.



DAVE EVANS (IFL)

Women mourn at the demonstration which marked the funeral of Gurdip Chaggar, murdered in Southall in June.

JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)



the thugs with sticks and broom handles. We called the police and the ambulance, but it was a long time before the police arrived. They went to see my husband in hospital and asked him to see them when he came out. But when he did they showed no interest at all. They made no attempt to catch the thugs."

According to Mr P.D. Singh, a nurse at East Ham Memorial Hospital, even at the height of racial violence there were no cases of Asian women admitted after racial attacks. "This is probably because the attackers are mainly teenagers looking for men to attack," he said. But hostility is by no means confined to teenagers — groups of Sikh women on the way home from the Sikh temple have been jostled and insulted by white women.

In Bradford rumours that Pakistani women have been attacked by white men were impossible to confirm because "The police do not want to give information on cases of Asian women attacked by white men, the attitude is



Young enthusiasts at a National Party rally in Plaistow, East London. Stuck on one boy's forehead is the slogan 'Who needs niggers?' The other stickers are reproduced above.



JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)

back on its feet. Now they don't want us. They can threaten us but we are here to stay."

In Bradford unemployment is at 7.2% — the national average is 6.4%. It's a huge problem for both black and white workers but it's worse for blacks. As one woman told me, "When someone has to go they always pick the black faces."

This year it's the women's jobs which are going. Since January, 1251 women have lost their jobs in the Bradford and Shipley area, compared to 695 men. Being black and a woman puts you at special risk. In Bradford about 1200 Asian women work outside their homes and those who haven't already lost their jobs are afraid that they soon will.

"Often," says Hamida Kazi, an Indian community worker, "employers create a situation where they can dismiss people and cheat them out of redundancy pay as well. When a woman who is ill sends in a sick note, she may be given a verbal warning when she

returns. If it happens again, she could be given a written warning or even dismissed. If these cases go to an industrial tribunal the employers always win. They have better legal representation, the personnel officer can produce evidence that the woman was warned. Even if the woman wants to produce witnesses, those witnesses can be intimidated. When the job situation is so bad, it's enough for them to be told, 'just you watch it'. As for the unions: in the case of Asian workers, women and men, they are usually on the management's side. In racialism there is no sex discrimination."

'Isolation is normal'

Women who lose their jobs, those with young children or those who can't speak English and don't want to venture out, are often homeworkers or "odd-jobbers", as they're called in the north. The work is tedious and exhausting and they fit it in between household chores. The rates are minimal. In Bradford

it can be as little as 2p for stitching a pair of child's dungarees. A woman can do 200 a day or 200 a week, depending on how much time and energy she has.

One homeworker told me, "some days at six o'clock in the evening, my eyes are sore, my body is aching but I manage to keep on at it. Other days I lose all strength of mind. I wonder if this is what my life is for, sewing bits of cloth together from morning till night."

Often the man who delivers and collects the work is their only contact with the outside world. "Isolation?" said one woman, "For a homeworker isolation is normal."

The economic situation has increased the number of homeworkers because it is cheaper to employ women working from home than to run a factory. At the same time the increased racism has heightened the isolation they feel. The fears of racist attack that keep women indoors are based not on vague rumours and worries but on everyday occurrences. ►

SEXISM & RACISM

'Mostly white women just pity you'

Significantly for women, the youth organisations and self-defence groups are also being condemned by certain older Asians, the same "Community leaders" who are used by the government's race relations machinery. It is some of these patriarchs who hold back the liberation of Asian women. They know about, do nothing to change, and sometimes even reinforce the feudal tyranny under which some Asian women in Britain live.

Hamida Kazi told me of a case she had been involved in. "It was the case of a Pathan family. The Pathans are often very orthodox Muslims — sometimes religious fanatics. The woman had bruises all over her body, even her eyes were cut — her husband used to beat her. She told me, 'Even if I am sleeping and he comes home at midnight, he pulls

my quilt off and starts beating me.'

"The cause of the conflict was the daughter. She is seventeen, a beautiful and very intelligent girl who is doing O Levels and wants to go on to A Levels. He wants her to get married to a man he has chosen. And he wants her to go back to Pakistan, because otherwise she will have her own way.

"One day he stabbed his wife in the hand. His ten-year-old son was terrified and ran and called the police. The police came and took him away. When I went to see the woman she was very calm and rational.

"I tried hard to get her a council house because I knew that when her husband came home (he had been remanded in custody) he would attack her again. She wanted to move out, but when I left her all the older men of the Pathan community came to see her and forced her not to accept the house. They told her that if she accepted it, she would be ostracised — that it was disrespectful to her husband and a loss of honour. I said, 'Where the hell were they when he was beating you? Isn't it disrespectful for a man to beat his wife?' But she wouldn't do anything. She was helpless. She had

no choice."

When such stories are reported they are used to show how Asians are "uncivilised", and that they should be setting their community in order instead of complaining about racism. These people forget, as they gasp in horror at the way Asian women are treated by their men, that Asian women too face racism and that they are angry about it as Asian men are.

One young woman in Newham told me "When I tell white women about the strain I am under within my extended family, they usually say, 'Why don't you just leave?' That in itself shows the barriers between us. They understand neither my feelings for my family nor the feelings of people outside — the racism which all Asians face." Another said, "Sometimes white women push and jostle you, sometimes they make faces at you. But mostly they just pity you.

"Some of them want to help Asian immigrants by teaching them English. Learning English is important but alone it won't help the communication problem. The barrier won't be broken until they know or even want to know our feelings, our minds."

BLACKBURN

'If you're not a racist in Blackburn there must be something wrong with you'

In Blackburn the situation was similar, but here the Asian Youth Organisation arranged defence. "There was speculation in the press," said one member of the AYO "that there were vigilante groups. We denied it every time. A vigilante group is a very well organised group — but we were just getting together and going down to the Boulevard to ensure that the black workers coming home from the two-to-ten shift were not attacked."

It was in Blackburn that a church leader saw fit to comment "If you are not a racist in Blackburn there must be something wrong with you." The immigrant area I visited is on a hillside overlooking the dying industries and decaying buildings. It is a criss-cross of roads of terraced houses. The immigrants are mainly from Mirpur in Kashmir; the women and children are strikingly, almost incongruously, beautiful.

The Asian Youth Organisation was formed because young Asian men and women were frustrated and angry; Blackburn has gone through a period when racial attacks, broken windows and insults were an everyday occurrence.



Young Asian contingent on anti-National Front march through Blackburn, 11th September.

JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)

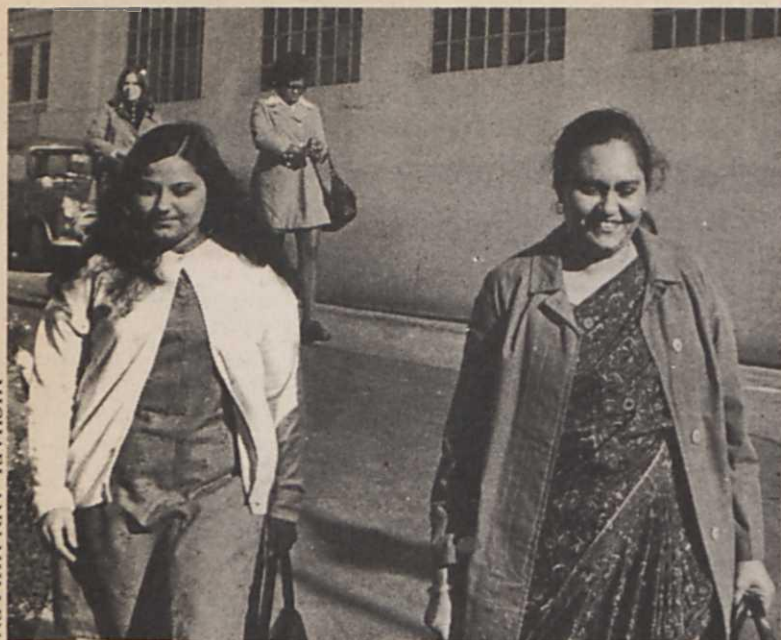
"Our reaction," said Khadim Quereshi, a founder of the AYO, "was to a need — the need to defend ourselves against physical attacks from racists. In the past we had left all the organising to the elders. They sorted out all the problems. Since we took it on ourselves to form an organisation, we have learned that our elders are as full of illusions about racism as we were before we were involved."

The AYO can call out hundreds of young Asians but it depends on a small core of activists — two of whom are women. They are aware of the need to involve women in the organisation and of the difficulty of doing so in a traditionally male-chauvinist community. They are organising demonstrations, leafletting and generally mobilising the Asian community. "We'll take the National Party as it comes," they told me. "If they demonstrate we'll counter-demonstrate, we'll clash with them if it comes to clashing."

It's an independent organisation but, Khadim said, "as we grew stronger, a lot

of people from different political parties started approaching us, there was this sudden attention to youth movements throughout the country. People would say that what we were doing was really great and that we should work in alliance with their group. It was the most confusing stage, but we are past it now we have rejected all these groups. In the very initial stages the International Socialists were closely associated with us . . . But our main objection to I.S. involvement is that they are not at all interested in Black people organising among themselves. What they want is mass recruitment — to get the sheep behind their banner."

The AYO has received nothing but disapproval from the government. Roy Jenkins has openly condemned all black self-defence groups. It seems he expects Asians to leave the defence of their communities to the discretion of the British police, and on another level, to people like himself and Jim Callaghan who are upholders of Britain's notoriously racist immigration laws.¹



End of shift at
a North London
factory.

Asian women are increasingly doing this. — at Imperial Typewriters, at Mansfield Hosiery, at Decca and many other factories. But the women involved are usually not ex-peasants from India but East African Asians, women who in Kenya and Uganda belonged to the small business or middle-managerial class. Here they find themselves as the exploited — and they are refusing to accept it.

But changes are on the way. In one Bradford mill, the personnel officer said of the Asian women workers, all from a peasant background in India, "Asian ladies are so well behaved, they complete their training so accurately, they never complain. But just lately I am a bit concerned about some of them. Particularly in the spinning section they seem rather odd, they can be rude, it is not like Asian ladies to answer back or just walk away. I don't know what is the matter with them." □

FOOTNOTES

1. Main racist features of British immigration laws:

The 1971 Patriality ruling means that there is no admission for new black workers while many new European workers are admitted under EEC regulations. For a full explanation see The New Immigration Law by Ian Macdonald (Butterworth).

Children and spouses of black people settled in Britain cannot get admission without going through a long, drawn-out humiliating procedure. And they are sometimes refused on obviously spurious grounds.

Even with British passports, black people are only admitted to Britain after several years wait, if at all, because of the quota voucher system (see Spare Rib 38 and 47).

2. The name "Naxalite" derives from the village of Naxalbari where in 1967 an armed peasant revolt started, inspiring a wave of similar uprisings in other parts of India. It developed into a programme to seize land and distribute it among the poor peasants and to establish people's political power.

STEPS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

'Learning to play bingo is no liberation'

Asian communities in Blackburn, Newham and many other areas of Britain are facing a change in outlook and values. With this change comes a possibility of political progress. It is likely that they will reject both the government's pacificatory race relations machinery and their own Uncle Toms, and work out a new political position.

This is particularly important for Asian women. Their lives are not separable from those of their families. Their spheres of struggle are interdependent. In simplified terms it is the racism they encounter in British society which pushes them back into their own communities; it is the oppression they suffer from their own men which weakens them in their fight against racism and exploitation at work. And once again, it is the effects of racism and exploitation on Asian men and children which makes such demands on Asian women that they are no longer free to think of themselves as individuals with individual needs.

However, the hostility and separation of culture does at least give some Asian girls an objective view of British society. "Learning to play Bingo or lay six pieces of cutlery is no liberation," said a Gujarati girl, "because liberation has nothing to do with westernisation."

Asian women don't need westernisation to eventually liberate themselves. Many of them are from the same peasant background as those who, in India, are

playing an equal part in the Naxalite movement.² It is taking part in the struggle itself which has liberated these women.

The oppression in Indian villages is explicit, the enemy easy to identify. But for Indian and Pakistani immigrant women, conditions in a British factory are so unfamiliar that at first the situation is hard to assess. For many, earning a wage of their own can be such a gigantic step in personal liberation that the conditions of work may seem unimportant.

One woman from rural Punjab told me, "I work in a clothes factory and nearly all my money I give to my father-in-law. But with the little I keep I like to buy a few small things for my children or for myself. These things are very important to me. They have a value beyond anything I have ever had before. My family resent it when I buy them, perhaps that is why they have such a special value."

These are the first steps towards independence, perhaps a political understanding. The next step is to recognise the exploitation at work and to fight it.

Strike meeting in progress at Gruns-
wick Film Processing,
Willesden, where
management has
resisted unionisation
for several years.

The workers are
mainly Asian, and
pay and conditions
are bad — £28 for a
40 hour week, with
compulsory over-
time. Most of the
staff have now joined
APEX, and the
official strike and
picketing will con-
tinue until the
management recog-
nise the union and
stop harassment
of members.

**NEXT MONTH
ON THE ROAD GOES TO
LEEDS, THEN BRIGHTON.
PLEASE LET US KNOW
IF YOU WANT A LISTING.**

On the Road

WOMEN'S ACTION GROUP

We're not so much a ball of fire, more a bunch of quietly glowing coals, shooting out sparks of activity into different groups.

Women and Health has published a comprehensive guide to contraception and is at present fighting Cardiff's absurd abortion clinic situation. The Study Group began by grappling with feminist philosophy and is now looking at women and literature. An Education Group looks at issues like sexism in school-books and parent-teacher roles.

Anyone can contribute to the free newsheet we compile periodically. We have great plans for a more ambitious magazine dealing with issues relevant to all Cardiff women.

Women's Aid and the Women's Rights Committee grew out of the group. We've also staged plays and sketches for conferences and theatre audiences.

Mothers and toddlers meet in each other's homes, and we go to the pub down the road after our meetings. What we have in common is a concern for our society and each other as women within it.

As we question our own role, we rake out old ashes and this refuels our enthusiasm. *We meet at the Friends Meeting House, Charles St on Mondays at 7.30 pm.*

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Women's Rights Committee for Wales was formed to lobby politicians, trade unions and other organisations. We gain strength from our link with the Women's Action Group — some of us are members of both.

Our ideal is to help the whole woman to emerge from the shadows, liberated. We work to persuade society to help women maintain their family roles, while making these compatible with working outside the home and taking part in political life.

In November we travelled to Luxembourg to present the first petition from the United Kingdom to the European Parliament. It called for changes in the draft directive on equal treatment for men and women workers, including equalisation of family responsibilities.

Now we're compiling evidence for the Royal Commission on the Health Service, and will ask for a review of health priorities in Wales.

Each month Spare Rib focuses on a different place, as part of a campaign to gain more readers and contributors. What are women in Cardiff doing?

WOMEN'S STUDIES

Last year there was one women's studies course here. This year four are planned. A group of us, most of whom had attended the first Cardiff course, felt we'd gained so much by sharing information, swapping personal experiences and carrying out projects together, that we wanted to make this available to people outside Cardiff as well.

The courses will be held at:

PONTYPRIDD: Adult Education Centre, Coed-y-Lan Lower Comprehensive School, Mill St. Starts Jan 10. 7-9 pm.

NEWPORT: YMCA, 109 Commercial St. Starts Oct 6. 7-9 pm.

CARDIFF: Arts Bldg, University College, Cathays Park. Starts Oct 5. 7-9 pm.

COWBRIDGE: Old Hall Centre, Starts Oct 7. 10 am-12 noon.

All courses consist of 10 lectures and cost £1.25. Further information: Gill Boden, Dept of Extra-Mural Studies, 38 Park Pl, Cardiff (44211 ext 2547/2425).



Information on WRCW: Gwen Awbery, 19 Ovington Tce (387014)

WOMEN'S AID

Some of us involved in Cardiff Women's Aid have made a videotape showing what it's like to come into a Refuge. Maureen and Elaine, two of the first women to come here, acted out what happened to them. If you'd like to borrow it or buy a copy, write to 108 Salisbury Rd (Tapes cost £5.50; cheaper if you borrow).

Refuges are open in Cardiff, Barry, Newport and Merthyr Tydfil, and starting up in Swansea and Caerphilly. Contact c/o 108 Salisbury Rd, Cardiff (28908).

We asked some of the women at the Cardiff refuge what they had expected:

Tanya — I expected it to be like a hostel, at least run like a hostel.

Dolly — I thought it would be like a house, because I'd heard about it.

Susan — I saw the TV film, I expected it to be an overcrowded house.

What don't you like about the refuge?

Julie — Overcrowding, especially when the kids are home from school.

Tanya — Especially with the water shortage. And it would be great if we had proper equipment — a decent cooker, a washer and a vacuum cleaner.

Dolly — The attitude of some of the neighbours.

CARDIFF SHORTLIST

*University Women's Group: Polly Feather, 10 Emerald St (372888).

*Education: Louise Homer, 76 Hamilton St (397901).

*Study: Jane Britten, 37 Conway Rd.

*Pro-Abortion Action (mostly concerned with the local situation): Anne Delaney, 23 Boverton St (21750).

Useful addresses and phone numbers:

*Playgroup for toddlers: 43 Charles St (34721, afternoons).

*Campaign for Homosexual Equality (the only gay group we know of): 2 Palace Rd, Llandaff.

*Gingerbread (for one parent families): Ann Straughn, 31 Lavender Gve, Pentrebrane.

*VD Clinic: Cardiff Royal Infirmary (33101 ext 294).

*Cardiff Housing Action: c/o 81 Rhydhelg Ave (612340/43268).

*Chapter Arts Centre (sometimes shows women's films, artworks, etc.): Market Rd (25776).

*Voluntary Community Service (info on housing and playgroups): 38 Charles St (27625). Contact Sue Taylor.

*Legal Advice: Sth Riverside Community Centre, Brunel St (23310, Tuesdays 7-8 pm).

*FPA: 21888 (mornings only for clinic appointments).

*BPAS (for pregnancy testing and abortion advice): 4 High St Arcade (372389).

Things to read and where to get them:

*Cardiff Peoples Paper: 56 Mackintosh Pl (22582).

*Rebecca (radical magazine for Wales): 40699.

*One-O-Eight Community Bookshop (alternative bookshop with good women's section): 108 Salisbury Rd (28908).

All addresses and phone numbers are in Cardiff (except CHE).

What do you like about the refuge?

Susan — being able to relax.

Tanya — Everyone understanding how you feel, and listening to everyone's problems.

Vicky — I feel safe and secure here.

FINGERPRINTS

Cardiffs' Community Print-shop. We offer a complete printing service, including offset up to 14 x 10, silk screen up to 20 x 30, and typesetting in Helvetica and Clarendon. We also sell cheap stationery and duplicating supplies.

Fast friendly & very cheap service for socialist & community groups.

Call or write now to
FINGERPRINTS
56, Mackintosh Place
CARDIFF 22582



IBM Typesetting
by Caroline MacKechie
Litho Design/Paste-up/Illustration
by J. Edward Barker
105 Golborne Road, London W10
Telephone 01-969 5083
Good rates for alternative publications

Sexism in Children's Books Facts, figures & guidelines

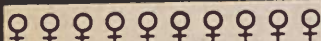


Edited by Children's Rights Workshop
70p (inc. p & p) from Writers and Readers Publishing
Cooperative 14 Talacre Road London NW5 3PE

FREE PREGNANCY TESTS

Also advice on abortion, vasectomy, female sterilisation and fertility control. British Pregnancy Advisory Service is a non-profit making registered charitable trust. Telephone
Birmingham (021) 643 1461
Brighton (0273) 509726
Cardiff (0222) 372389
Chester (0244) 27113
Leeds (0532) 443861
Liverpool (051) 227 3721
London (01) 222 0985
Manchester (061) 236 7777
Sheffield (0742) 738326

BPAS

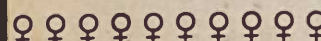


SUPER SERVICES

Astrology : Gardening : Typing
Electrical Repairs & Rewiring
Hair Cutting : Removals
Cushions Covered : Upholstery
Interior Decorating : Typesetting
: etc :

By Women for Women
01-229 0145

80 Lancaster Road London W11



THE WOMEN'S DIRECTORY by Carolyn Faulder, Christine Jackson & Mary Lewis

A vital self-help guide
to women's issues
&

A handbook of resources
with full listing of
names, addresses, phone
numbers of women's groups,
organizations, campaigns...

Paperback £1.95
October 25 1976

At bookshops, libraries,
or from 3 Cheyne Place,
London SW3 4HH
01-352 0524



COMPENDIUM

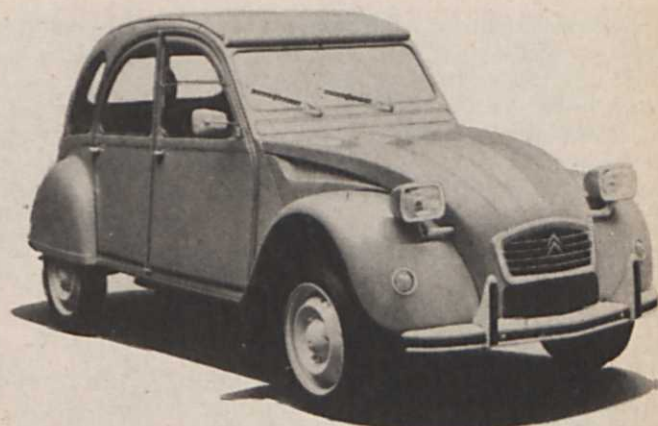
COMPENDIUM
240 Camden High St
London NW1
Telephone 01-485 8944

Large selection of
books on women
and sexual politics

Mail Order Service
Send for list
10p incl. postage

A GROWTH CENTRE FOR
EVERYONE to explore, expand,
self-realize and perhaps to change.
GESTALT, BIO-ENERGETICS,
MASSAGE, PSYCHODRAMA,
TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS,
MEDITATION, ENCOUNTER,
CO-COUNSELLING, TAI-CHI-
CHU'AN, AND MORE. We offer
weekend workshops, lectures, on-
going groups, introductory days,
advanced training and intensive
courses. DROP-IN INTRODUCTORY
GROUP every TUESDAY
and FRIDAY 7.30pm, no need
to book. MALE/FEMALE AND
SEXUALITY on-going group.
Wednesdays, led by Alix Berlin.
WOMEN ALIVE - Thursdays on-
going group. Bio-energetic move-
ment and focus on issues of
being a woman in the world
today. All at
COMMUNITY
15 Highbury Grange
LONDON N.5 01-359 1372.

The small Citroëns make friends everywhere.



2CV6

The small Citroëns are not greedy cars.

They are careful with petrol. The 2CV did 54mpg in Autocar's economy car test in March last year and the Dyane Weekend and Ami 8 saloon and estate also have very small thirsts.

They are easy on rubber. All have big 15" wheels fitted with Michelin radial tyres.

The small Citroëns need no head gaskets, water pumps or antifreeze because their engines are air-cooled.

In all of them, a modest square-yardage of metal encloses ample knee, head and luggage space.

On the 2CV and Dyane Weekend, we even leave a hole in the roof. So you can roll back the top and let in free fresh air and sunshine when in season.

While conserving earthly resources, these cars are generous where it matters. In safe roadholding and braking, comfort and durability.

The 2CV, Dyane Weekend and Ami 8 saloon and estate are among the best buys in new cars today, and all rate a high trade-in price when you sell.

Try them at your Citroën dealer's, and ask him how you can save even more with our preferential insurance scheme.

Or write for colour brochure and dealer list to
Citroën Cars Ltd, Dept F158, Mill Street, Slough SL2 5DE.

Citroën 2CV/Dyane/Ami



Ami 8 Estate

Dyane Weekend

2CV6 £1364.22 Dyane Weekend £1499.94 Ami 8 £1524.51 Ami 8 Estate £1614.60.

Prices include car tax and VAT (seat belts, number plates and delivery extra).

Prices correct at time of going to press.

Please enquire about our Personal Export, H.M. Forces and Diplomatic schemes.

CITROËN

“I was going to start by telling you how I came to join the pre-orgasmic group, but I suppose a lot of things preceded that step.

I had a fairly active life sexually with various men for four years before I realised that something was missing. Oh, I'd enjoyed fucking all right but it certainly wasn't all I'd been led to expect. I became convinced that I must be one of those women I'd read about in agony columns and sex books who just didn't reach a climax — and that was that. The few times I'd try masturbating (and *try* was the operative word) I always found I turned myself off within a couple of minutes. Since I was sharing a bedroom with a friend, my sexual experimenting was rather restricted anyway.

Then about eighteen months ago I thought it happened — but as I passed out for nearly a minute I couldn't be sure. Still I was delighted and consequently put heavier demands on my lover which he couldn't cope with, so we split up. It wasn't until nine months later that I met Jay and this relationship was the best ever sexually although I still had no orgasms. Even though I now had my own room I didn't find masturbation satisfying, and once again I was beginning to strain this relationship by becoming more dependent on him and resenting it.

As in all good fairy tales, help was at hand. My newsagent remembered to deliver the March issue of *Spare Rib* (No. 44) which mentioned that groups were starting for women in my situation. I was overwhelmed to realise that there were other women like me. I tried to bring up the subject in my women's group but got nowhere. A couple of women dismissively put down the article as 'too clinical' and I was too upset to pursue it. But even without their encouragement I was determined to follow it up. By the time the group started I had become involved in a steady relationship with Jay which proved to be very supportive about all this.

The first group meeting, with eight 'members' and four 'helpers' was amazing; we were asked to think back to our childhood and the ideas about sexuality that we had grown up with. Soon my mind was teeming with memories of things which had obviously influenced me, but had never occurred to me before as being important. Suddenly I realised that there were good reasons for my difficulties, reasons which many of us shared as women, and that maybe by understanding them we could work them out. I left the meeting inspired and eager to tackle the "homework".

The second week was equally fruitful. Jay and I had been making love one day and he was urging me not to touch him but to 'lie back and enjoy myself'. I realised then that another of my 'Problems' was my great reluctance to be passive. I discussed this in the group: this feeling that I ought to be active in order to please my partner, and the need to think of myself as 'a good lay' (that admission really hurt!) and the idea that giving was better than receiving. Together with this, went the notion that receiving pleasure was passive and so part of the traditional female role, a role I'd been determined not to fall into all my life. Someone in the group suggested I try to see myself as 'taking' rather than receiving pleasure, an active

rather than a passive relationship, but I found that impossible to accept.

The following week, also while making love, I had another insight which I'd sooner not have had. I caught myself thinking 'If only he loved me everything would be all right.' I was shocked at myself — Me! The arch-enemy of Romanticism and all those myths about Mr Right! I suppose it showed how deep that conditioning goes. I burst into tears, and couldn't face doing any more "homework" that week I had to force myself to go to our next meeting. I was frightened by what other skeletons might fall out of the cupboard, facts about myself I'd rather not know. Still luckily I went since we talked about vibrators and I heard that many women use electric toothbrushes (with the bristles removed) as a way of masturbating. I'd been thinking of getting one anyway, so I bought it that week-end.

Unfortunately I didn't have time to try it on my own before I saw Jay and he was so keen to join in that I agreed to try it with him there. It terrified me; and a shock went through me as I held it against my clitoris so I turned it off straight away. Jay was annoyed at me for not trying harder. "I don't understand you," he fumed, "You've worked out all the things that have caused this, you've been going to the group for four weeks, and now you're just going back to the way it's always been." His reaction hurt me, and rejection was the one thing I didn't need just then. I tried to explain that that *was* my problem — I was terrified of letting go and giving in to those strong sensations. I was also worried that it wouldn't work anyway and that I didn't deserve all this time and attention. He soon apologised for his angry reaction — but I still couldn't go on.

Just before that week's meeting I decided I owed it to myself to try once more with my special toothbrush. First a tingling tension began to build starting in my toes and spreading up to my knees and my belly. I felt my entire pubic area swell and then radiate with intense heat: "My God," I thought, "the bloody thing's trying to electrocute me!" But it didn't. Instead my whole vaginal area including the anus began to move of their own accord. When it stopped, I wasn't sure if what I'd experienced was really IT, but when I described the feelings to the women in the group they assured me it probably was and were very excited to hear my news. I patted myself on the back. A few days later I used the toothbrush again while Jay was inside me and although it felt good it was still a bit unreal. I was only fully convinced when on my own I watched myself in a mirror while I masturbated and saw my genitals turn a beautiful shade of red, like the roses in the garden, and I could actually see the contractions. When they died away I was aware of the trickle of sweat down the back of my legs. I lay back not exhausted but elated. I'd done it — I'd broken through all those barriers of fear and confusion which for so many years had prevented me from getting in touch with my sexuality and stopped me from experiencing the pleasure I now knew was within my own control.

There are still lots of things to work out in my sexual relationship but I'm optimistic about this now that I feel so much more positive and sure about myself sexually. The effort involved was certainly worthwhile. □

Earthly Delights

Early this year *Spare Rib* ran a series about women's sexuality and the work of sexual self help groups in America for women who have never had orgasms (*Spare Rib* 42 & 44). As a result a pre-orgasmic women's group started in London, and Lynn, a school teacher in her late twenties, was a member of the first group



NEWS

"Please don't ask to see the boss..."

Moss Side Press has been going for about five years as Manchester's only real alternative press. It started at a time when there was a sudden burst of "alternative" activity—the first issues of Manchester's two community papers appeared, and tenants' groups, claimants' unions and the women's movement began to organise. Moss Side Press provided a vital service—cheap printing handled by sympathetic people.

Since August, the press has been run entirely by three women—Luchia Fitzgerald, Sheila Johnson and Angela Cooper.

Luchia used to live at the Manchester Women's Centre with Angela, and they both sang in the Northern Women's Liberation Rock Band. They're all in various Manchester women's groups—a small local study group, and the Women and Socialism and Women and Music groups. All three are gay.

They have a notice on the wall saying "This press is a co-op, run by three women, so please don't ask to see the boss, the supervisor or the manager".

They are keen to take on as much work as possible for the women's movement, but they do want to continue as Manchester's community press. They print pamphlets and posters for many local groups, some of whom can be a bit unaware when it comes to women.

"We can only reflect the state of the alternative, and that isn't very good at the moment. We're still having to print stuff that has the odd sexist remark or cartoon—you often see it in student or community papers, but it's more to do with sloppy thinking than anything else really," said Sheila.



Angela Cooper Δ

▽ Sheila Johnson and Luchia Fitzgerald



The new collective hope they'll be able to do something about that. "We're going to have a meeting with people that use us. We don't want to be regarded as just 'The Printers'. We want to have a stake in what's being done. A lot of people don't even realise we're alternative. They

just think we're a cheap option."

Glorified Duplicator

But for the time being there are practical problems to get to grips with. Money and skills.

Luchia's really the only one who knows her way about the Press. She's been working there

for about three years on a voluntary basis learning how to work the machinery from men who previously ran it.

The Press is housed in a two-storey, barn-like building down an alley-way off Moss Side's Princess Road. On the ground floor there's a 15-year-old offset litho A3 press and a wrought iron guillotine, like a Victorian mangle. Upstairs, there's the darkroom and plate-maker and Paddy the dog, the women's only full-time male companion.

"The press is just a glorified duplicator," says Luchia. "We get blokes coming in here saying 'Do you run that?' I just say, 'No mate, it runs itself'. There's nothing to it. It's like learning to drive. That's easy enough. But then you've got to learn what to do when it breaks down."

And it breaks down regularly, so they want a replacement. But they've no money. "We aren't taking over a sinking ship, but there's still a hole in the bottom," said Luchia. They've halved a £1,000 debt in the last few months, but they want to clear that and raise £600 more for a new press. They've been told of an excellent second-hand press ▷

WORK NEWS

that's for sale.

"If we can get hold of that, we're laughing. It would be a shame to let an opportunity like that go. So we want as many people who can to send us money."

Self-Help

Already they've had enquiries from women's groups about printing jobs. They charge according to the finances of their customers—they printed the first issue of the Manchester Women's Paper for nothing, to get it going. And they make a bit more out of establishment organisations that use the Press.

They've also made contact with women abroad who are interested in printing, after Luchia and Angela went to a Women's Festival and Camp in Denmark this summer. "A group of women we met there from Oslo want to set up a women's press, and they're coming over here to learn how Moss Side Press works."

As far as they know, it's the only press in the country run entirely by women, and there's an open invitation to any woman to go there to learn about printing, layout, design.

"We want to encourage women to produce stuff, and we'd be pleased to give advice on anything to do with printing. We'd like to do more cultural work as well—feminist posters, poems and drawings."□

Marion Bowman

Contact Moss Side Press,
21a Princess Rd, Manchester 14
(061-226 7115).

£50,000 FOR FAKENHAM

NORFOLK: Women who occupied a shoe factory in Fakenham when the firm that owned it folded four years ago (see SR 35), have just won a £50,000 government grant.

Recently they'd been down to eight workers, struggling to survive. Now with £50,699 from the Manpower Services Commission under the job creation programme, they are forming a new company, Fakenham Fashion Co-operative, which will employ a team of 24.

"We will be taking on the new workers from the pool of unemployed," said Nancy McGrath, who took part in the original work-in and is largely responsible for this rescue. "It is envisaged that after a year we will be viable, and able to stand on our own feet."

The old co-operative will continue its contract work, making shoes and leather goods in a workshop over a garage.□

TRICO'S: Christmas on the Pavement?

BRENTFORD: The 400 women and few men at Trico's, out five months now for equal pay, have thrown out management's latest offer. All but three voted against it on September 17.

"He must think we're green as cooking apples," said Eileen Ward, clock-office clerk and shop steward. "The offer was only worth ten bob!"

"We refused £2 seven weeks ago. Now he adds 50p to that, puts the government's 4½% on top of that again, and calls it £5.50.

"But £2.50 of that doesn't count—it's ours by right anyway, under this pay deal. And he won't even backdate it to January 1, when the Act came in, because he says it's nothing to do with equal pay."

"And he was hoping to scrap all our old agreements, which we've fought bloody hard for. So a lot of us would have gone back with less than we started with." The women, backed by their union, the AUEW, are holding out for the same basic rate as the men. As it's piecework, everyone is paid according to performance, but on average this would mean £6.50 a week extra, over and above the 4½% that all workers are entitled to.

Now the 'male' operation rate is 36.7p an hour; the 'female'

rate is 29.2p an hour.

In August an industrial tribunal defended this difference as compensation to the men for coming off night shift, where they earned more. But the men did not just get extra because it was nightwork—they got a higher operational rate, and still do.

Open-ended Cheque

On September 3 all production line workers in Brentford and at Trico's Northampton plant were laid off with no pay till the strike is over. Six GMWU members had already come out in support; the GMWU has now made the strike official, and those six are getting strike pay.

The other shop floor union, the TGWU, has not yet made the strike official. "They seldom do till a strike's over," said a man on the picket-line. "They're a rich union and don't like to sign an open-ended cheque."

Boots Full Of Wipers

The strike's certainly at deadlock. All day and night there's a small group of women at the gate, watching the cars that drive in and out.

It's against the law to do more than "peacefully communicate" with drivers, so union officials have told the women not to try to stop cars, though many want to, knowing that wipers—on which Trico's have a near

monopoly in this country—are being smuggled out. They did follow one car, and found the driver unloading wipers into lorries round the corner.

Some women still question strangers going into the factory, saying they get frustrated just sitting there. One said she thought they looked silly, "like a tea party". Some felt useless and stopped picketing, thinking the strike committee was in charge and could cope—maybe the same deference to authority stops them volunteering for the delegations that go round the country, explaining the issues at trade union meetings, collecting for the strike fund and getting Trico wipers blacked.

The office staff still drive in daily, then stare out of the windows—there's no work to do. Management manoeuvres, and the women wait. What's the next step?

"After this offer, we'll have to wait and see," said Betty Humphreys, assembly worker and shop steward. "We're not going in till we get our equal pay. We're prepared to have our Christmas tree here and dance round it."□

Jill Nicholls

They still need support on the picket-line and contributions to the strike fund. Contact Trico Strike Committee, AUEW House, 1 Woodlands Rd, Southall, Middx.

'Women are not popular with the public'

When Jackie Bat-Isha was told that only men could be Cheddar Caves guides, she took it to a tribunal—and won. But a "win" doesn't amount to much as Jackie explains:

I'd been unemployed six months when I saw an ad in a local paper for guides at Cheddar Caves. I was told on the phone that they wouldn't employ women because they weren't "popular with the public". We had quite a row and I was offered an interview.

When I arrived I was told all the posts had been filled. So I decided to see what could be done under the Sex Discrimination Act, preparing the case myself.

At the tribunal hearing in Bristol on August 24, Cheddar Caves were found guilty of unlawful discrimination because they refused to consider my application for the job. I was awarded £3 for my wasted journey to Cheddar, £15 for the loss of opportunity of being considered for the job and £20 for injury to feelings.

The tribunal refused to make any recommendation to ensure that if a woman applied for the job again, she might get it.

Individualising

Of course it was good to "win", but if winning just means that I get £38 that is hardly the point—I obviously didn't bring the case just to get money for myself, and anyway, what's £38 to Cheddar Caves, owned by Longleat Enterprises. A clear indication of women's worth in the eyes of the tribunal!

Under the Act a tribunal can only make recommendations that "obviate or reduce the adverse effect on the complainant". Throughout the hearing it was made clear that they would see the issue only in terms of the personal inconvenience and injury that I suffered.

Unabashed

The case was a clear one. I shouldn't think there'll be many more where discrimination will be so easy to prove. The general manager, Mr Say, is so sexist that he had no desire even to attempt to hide his prejudices—it was amusing to watch his solicitor trying to get him off the hook!

He tried the line that the tribunal should appreciate Mr Say's frankness, and then that his attitudes weren't relevant to the question of whether discrimination had taken place! But under my cross-examination, Mr Say admitted he might well put his personal opinions into practice in the context of his job.

And so it went on—he wouldn't employ women as cave guides because they didn't have the right voices, wouldn't be strong enough to cope with heavy cleaning work or control groups of visitors. He said he might

employ an 'Amazon' but only if no men were available.

I also had to sit through some insulting rubbish about not having a midget showing visitors round—I am 5' 1"—he would only employ men of his own height and over.

The defence called as witness Robert Charles, Longleat's chief executive, who said there was so much new legislation that he hadn't yet had time to issue a directive about the Sex Discrimination Act. Such directives will now be issued, and maybe some other companies in the West Country will be jolted by the

Jacky (left) with friends



case. But one wonders what the result will be with men like Say in charge of recruitment—presumably just that discrimination will go underground.

I am asking the Equal Opportunities Commission to decide whether to issue a Non-Discrimination Notice against Cheddar Caves—which would mean it would be watched for five years. They have the power to do so, but the NCCL thinks it's unlikely they will in this case.

So a company is found to have unlawfully discriminated against a woman, and all they have to do is pay her £38! No fine imposed, no directive issued. And I only 'won' because they were so open about their prejudices at the tribunal.

The Act appears to be worth less than the paper it is written on. The only real changes it has affected so far are that men can become midwives and govern women's prisons. Job advertisements have changed of course, but all that seems to mean is that women are wasting their time, energy and money going for interviews for jobs which they will never get. □

UNOFFICIALLY UNEQUAL

BROMWICH: A hundred women at Jeavons Engineering in Tipton, Staffs, have been on strike since mid-August, demanding equal pay for women who do the same work as men and regrading for those who do semi-skilled work but are classified as unskilled.

They've rejected management's latest offer of £3—for equal pay they need a minimum of £5 plus regrading. They're picketing all day, but management is smuggling materials in by night. Men working there have not come out in support; some have already been laid off.

The women's union, the TGWU, has so far refused to make the strike official, so they're getting no strike pay. □
Donations and support to Jeavons Dispute, c/o TGWU Regional Office, 9-17 Victoria St, Bromwich, Staffs.

APPEALING EXCUSE

CARDIFF: A barrister representing A.B. Electronics, who were being asked to pay an extra £10 weekly to 39 women workers, said a male employee might lose his job if the women's pay were raised.

"If we waited to find that out we'd never get anywhere," commented tribunal chairman David Powell. "Once these laws are accepted, that is something we will give thought to."

"It wouldn't surprise me if, in the next six months, all these decisions were appealed against."

He can say that again: his panel then rejected the equal pay demand, so Eileen Bray, who says she shares equal responsibility with a man as inspector, and the other women, will have to consider how to take their fight further. □

The Cheddar Valley Gazette

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1976

Asinine law

ANY LAW which, in the long run and in general causes people to act in a devious way would seem to be bad law.

The Sex Discrimination Act is such a case.

Last week Mr. Leonard Say, the manager at Cheddar Caves, was taken before an industrial tribunal by Miss Jackie Bat-Isha, of Shepton Mallet, who alleged that Mr. Say had discriminated against her because of her sex in the appointment of a guide for his caves.

The tribunal agreed with her, and awarded her a total of £38.

Why does Mr. Say have to pay this £38? Because he is an honest man! He said very frankly that he thinks that men make better cave guides than women, and therefore he employs men. On the other hand he thinks that women make better gift shop attendants than men, and so he employs women there.

To be honest like that costs you money under an asinine law! What most prospective employers do when they want to appoint a man for a particular job is to go through the motions of interviewing men and women impartially, and then, having chosen their man, tell the ladies that after careful selection they have chosen Mr. Smith. Purely on merit and qualifications, of course, and nothing to do with sex.

If the employer has been sufficiently careful, and devious, there is nothing that the ladies can do about it. It is the law which makes such sinners of employers, and what Miss Bat-Isha has done is not to strike a blow for Women's Lib, but to expose some of the absurdities of the Sex Discrimination Act.

The simple truth, Miss Bat-Isha, is that men and women are not equal: they are different. In some jobs men do better than women, in others women do better than men. The jobs may be equal, but the men and women aren't.

All the acts of parliament in the world won't alter a simple biological fact.

NEWS

EASY MOTIONS AT THE TUC

While some women at the TUC conference got down to practicalities, and Judith Gray even urged delegates to share the housework, generally the conference seemed happier to deal in principles—which is all they could do seeing as they'd generally accepted the government's economic policies, so much of what they voted in can't be implemented. Clare Cherrington asks what will come out of the conference for women.

"What must we women do to get a fair deal from the TUC?" asked Margaret Morrison (Civil Service Union), arguing that women should have at least one seat on the Council per million women union members.

She pointed out that although women form 27% of union membership they have no more representation on the Council than they did at its inception in 1921. They now have two out of 38 seats—her motion would have upped it to three.

With the NUJs counter motion to abolish any reserved seats at all because it was discriminatory, the debate was on. It was up to Barbara Switzer (AUEW/TASS) to reply that such discrimination is an urgent necessity. Free competition can only exist between equals and women don't have equality in this society!

Then Len Murray stepped in, asking that it be shelved, which it was. Said he: "We are not enamoured of special rights for women, but we do recognise the need for some positive discrimination in favour of women because of the historical tragedy with which we have been left." So what exactly, Mr Murray?

By positive discrimination, unions like NUPE, AUEW and

"Should we sit back quietly and accept that Len Murray and his merry men know much better than women what is right in our working lives?" Margaret Morrison (Civil Service Union) pushes for more representation of women in the union hierarchy.

GMWU now have special women's seats and consequently vastly more women officers. On the other hand NALGO is boycotting the TUC women's conference saying it shunts off women's issues—a crucial point which splits the unions.

Notional Men

But divisions between the unions didn't stop them voting unanimously in favour of making the Equal Pay Act work. Bill Taylor (AUEW) urged delegates to support the strike of Trico workers who had come to lobby congress. Pat Turner (GMWU) said tribunals made "arbitrary and erratic" decisions, and Judith Hunt (AUEW/TASS) put a motion to review them and amend the Act's wording.

It should read, she said, "equal pay for work of equal value instead of equal pay for work of the same or broadly similar nature". Where there is no man working alongside or woman elsewhere doing the same work for higher pay, then the "concept of a notional man" should be

Helen Gallacher (AUEW/TASS) protests at the delay in introducing the child benefits scheme.

introduced.

This is an important idea, the first attempt at defining fair pay for work which only women do. The idea is that you find the average male wage for a comparable occupation and take this as a "notional man's pay" which serves as a minimum rate. This could knock sideways the often idiotic excuses tribunals use to reject claims.

So far this is just a recommendation to the Equal Opportunities Commission that the law be changed and tribunals reviewed. Meanwhile unions must do back-up work and educational. Some actively support demands for equal pay, but too many still do not.

Cuts—Worst for Women

After equality came survival. Dr Judith Gray (Medical Practitioners Union), attacking the cuts, said, "Women are having to look after the old and the sick who should be provided for socially."

Spending on nursery schools is dropping drastically. Two-thirds of the civil service redundancies to come are women. And one cut leads to another—already 7,500 Glasgow area cleaners are fighting for their jobs as a result of health and education cuts.

Why the cuts anyway? NUPE argues that they're not only harmful but useless. The £140m saving is made ridiculous by the £120m that will be lost on account of the firings. Besides hardship and increased unemployment, the economic benefit is dubious: it's unlikely that the expected investment increase will take place. There's enough money around, but it isn't being invested in manufacturing. The government helps the private sector by reducing taxes, but the private sector only helps itself.

Child benefit Confusion

Cash is undoubtedly the real factor behind the government's sell-out on child benefits in May and the TUC leaders' compromise proposal. Terry Parry of the Social Insurance Committee explained to the conference that they hadn't wavered on principle. It was just that only £90m of the original £210m was available for the scheme.

Leading the motion to implement the benefits immediately, Alistair Graham (CPSA) said the government was behaving as if Andy Capp was their advisor. If the metric system could be explained over the media, why couldn't child benefits? Helen Gallacher added that the scheme was "absolutely essential now to alleviate the hardship which is being felt by families due to the phasing out of food subsidies".

Conference voted for immediate implementation of the original scheme, but now that the government has accepted their compromise proposal, what'll they do? They can't back both proposals at once.

The Child Benefits Now Campaign is in no doubt about what they'll do: they never accepted the compromise, and see the TUC backing as something of a victory. "But don't be fooled into thinking we've won," says Ruth Lister on behalf of the campaign. "The new compromise is a small step forwards because it does at least establish the principle of a tax free child benefit, but it won't mean an extra penny for anyone next April."

The campaign goes on collecting signatures to its petition. Their next aim is to get a vote for immediate implementation from the Labour Party Conference. Ironically, the DHSS is hoping the campaign will explain to the public the by now totally confusing mess the government has got itself into with its second change.

But maybe it's too easy to get motions passed at the TUC. The past five years have shown a great change in their attitude—this year they voted for abortion to be made more easily available. But you still get Cyril Plant standing up on the first day mouthing his high ideals:

"Beyond the task, vital though it is, of being economic engineers, we are concerned, above all, to fight for the enlarging and enriching of the life of the common people, to broaden and deepen the quality of this life, to enlarge the dignity of man, here in our own country and throughout the world." Oh yeah?

"We haven't fought so long and hard for equal rights to be cheated at the end by unrepresentative bodies." Pat Turner (GMWU) attacks the tribunal system.

WORK: a right to fight for?

What's behind the slogan "A Woman's Right To Work"? Anny Brackx tries to find out.

When I first saw people with "A Woman's Right To Work" badges pinned on their jackets I thought—bad joke—it's about time women felt they had the right to sit back.

It dawned on me that 'the left' might be trying to recruit the women's movement for the "Right To Work March" to the TUC in Brighton on September 4. The march, mainly organised by the International Socialists, went to criticise and heckle the TUC, for accepting the government cuts and unemployment.

I had my doubts about the slogan "A Woman's Right To Work". After wading through some vanguardist rhetoric, and an informal discussion with Celia, one of the women on the march, who was also involved in "A Woman's Right To Work", things became even more complicated.

Divisive Demand?

It emerged that the International Socialists wanted support from women, but not as a separate group. The march committee decided that "A Woman's Right



The banner that passed the censors

To Work" banner was divisive and a banner which made it clear that women were fighting together with the rest of the unemployed, was carried instead.

"They came up with the absurd argument that they didn't want all women to band together and march under our banner" . . . it was obvious Celia was not a supporter of IS. The International Marxist Group on the other hand pretended they were not there; they just happened to support "A Woman's Right To Work"!

We discussed the demand itself in more detail and Celia did agree that the formulation was rather clumsy and that a lot of women might feel it denied the labour involved in housework. When I went on to say that working on a conveyorbelt

sounded more like a punishment than a right to fight for, especially if it meant cramming in the housework later, Celia summoned Marx:—the unemployed cannot withdraw their labour—they have no power—women are isolated at home—only when they get together with other workers outside can they organise against capitalism and change their situation. . . .

I did point out that women have no guarantee that their specific oppression, of being servicers of men and children, will end with the collapse of capitalism; that in fact their suspicions of the left are often justified: "the woman question" is usually conveniently forgotten for reasons of economic necessity; in the Soviet Union plans

for socialised housework and childcare were dropped soon after the revolution.

Back To Brasstacks

Celia brought the conversation back to brasstacks by saying that the demand for "A Woman's Right To Work" was a strategic one, specific to the present crisis. Health and education are the worst hit by the government's "economising policy", and happen to be the sectors which employ a majority of women, a lot of them part-timers.

The demand was in fact coined by the student teachers of Garnett College, who were involved in the occupation of their college in protest against the cuts in education (see SR 49). In their pamphlet they state that "in a period of crisis, those sections of the labour force and social services which do not make profits for the capitalists have to be shed". This not only means that women are laid off first, but also that they get burdened at home with what used to be waged social services jobs: caring for the sick, elderly and young.

Seen from this angle, struggling for "A Woman's Right To Work" means hitting out against the machinations of a capitalist state, which makes use of the age-old myth of woman = homemaker, whenever necessary. □

"For A Woman's Right To Work—Fight The Cuts" produced by Garnett College Students and available from Celia Shalom, 13 Ravenshaw St, London NW6 1NP at 10p + postage per copy.

Mine's a Babycham

MANCHESTER: Two women who were refused "man-size" pints at the Church Inn in Whitefield may take court action.

When Jane McIver, a 22-year-old therapist, went there with a boy friend she was refused a pint but offered a half.

Advised by the Equal Opportunities Commission to try again, to make sure the landlord refused her order more than once, she returned with her flat mate, Diana Williams.

Once again landlord Bill Imms refused to serve them pints. So they're planning action under the Sex Discrimination Act. Bill Imms, a former policeman, is sure they'll lose: "A landlord has complete discrimination inside his own premises to serve who he likes."

He told *What's Brewing*, paper of the Campaign for Real Ale, that he's "very old-fashioned, not just old-fashioned". He refused Jane a pint the first time

because she was with a "hairy creature" and "dressed like a tramp".

"I object to women who dress like men and swear like men", he added.

Landlords have a common law right to refuse customers—but now cannot refuse service on grounds of sex. This case would have to resolve that contradiction.



WAITING FOR THE STATE

A board set up to investigate sex discrimination in occupational pension schemes reported to Parliament on August 18. What did they suggest?

The Occupational Pensions Board assume the sexes should have equal status in these schemes, which means giving men the option of retiring at 60, but don't want to force employers to stop discriminating before the DHSS does.

The Board want access to pension schemes to be equal, but there seems little chance of this. Part-time workers—mostly women—are often excluded or poorly treated. The Board's only answer is for employers to "admit part-time employees to pension schemes wherever it is practicable"—which means

nothing.

They want paid maternity/paternity leave to be counted as work for pension purposes—how unpaid leave is dealt with is left to the employer.

Provision for employees' widowers should, they suggest, be extended to match that for widows. It's now assumed that only married men have dependents—as a married woman doesn't support her husband, there's no provision for him if she dies.

If this changed and the cohabitation rule didn't, sex snoopers would have to check up on widowers too!

The Board believes wives have a right to information about their husband's pension. This could be important—according to a recent survey less than half of husbands discuss with their wives what the financial situation would be if they retired or died (and most wives outlive their husbands). □

**Legal and Financial
Independence Campaign**

BODY NEWS

The Sensitive Kerb-Crawler and the Common Prostitute

"A man moving around in a car or on foot and talking to a woman or a succession of women is not prima facie creating a nuisance, as is a woman dressed and posed as a street walker..." Home Office Working Party on Vagrancy and Street Offences 1976.

This report, which took six years to produce, "updates" the Vagrancy Acts by introducing sleeping rough as an imprisonable offence—on its first page it announces that it would have been outside its terms of reference to consider vagrancy in relation to social services and housing.

For prostitutes, it recommends retention of the Street Offences Act 1959, which allows the state to tax them without seeming to condone their profession and without endangering its continued existence. It supports the harassment, fining and imprisonment of prostitutes.

In refusing to propose a single offence of accosting and importuning to include both sexes, they endorse the view that prostitutes should take the blame for their customers.

The Working Party of 12 men

and one woman, mostly civil servants and police officers, want the police to decide which of us is a nuisance through cautions; and reject proposals that someone should complain of nuisance before a charge can be brought.

They defend the life-long label "common prostitute"—which is applied after two cautions for loitering or soliciting and which they think is "to some extent invited"—because of its familiarity in the courts. They recommend increased fines, and support prison sentences for twice-convicted prostitutes.

Men Don't

Turning to men, they observe: "male heterosexual prostitutes do not solicit or loiter obtrusively in the streets". So there need be no laws against them. But male homosexual prostitutes are still a separate category, getting heavy fines for a first offence—male



homosexuals are fined the first time they're caught, not "protectively cautioned" as women are.

The Working Party suggest a new offence—kerb-crawling. They recognise this as a menace, but think it "would require much more observation to prove" than the nuisance of prostitution. So these men shouldn't be cautioned by the police, and there'd have to be proof of wilful intent.

Just being on the street incriminates a "common prostitute", but a kerb-crawler must be seen to have "persistently" accosted women for "sexual purposes" before action could be taken against him. This double standard is explained "The kerb-crawler may be a respected member of the community and much more sensitive to the stigma of

a court appearance than, say, a confirmed prostitute".

Asexual Streakers

Fully clothed women on the streets worry the Working Party more than naked ones. They exclude women from their proposed new offence of sexually motivated indecent exposure because "there is no significant problem". Anyway, "the anatomical differences are an obvious obstacle". (To what?)

Publicly exposed male genitals can offend or disturb women, girls, boys and parents of children under 13. The power of the prick is strongest when its owner has a sexual motive. So they recommend two offences: one for flashers and less for asexual streakers. They feel streaking might cover female nudity "if a general formula can be devised to describe unacceptable nakedness without anatomical references".

Alternatives?

Radical Alternatives to Prison is critical of the report: "Soliciting (by men or women) should cease to be a criminal offence. Prostitution exists in all societies which place a low value on women and a high value on moral righteousness. The Working Party give much weight to the annoyance of innocent men approached in the street and passers-by forced to witness such approaches. It is worth noting that women have been tolerating the approaches of men in the streets for centuries." □

Victoria Green

Who'll help you get an abortion?

LONDON: To your average commuter shuttling backwards and forwards on the underground, the Pregnancy Advisory Service poster "If you're happy to be pregnant, fine—if not phone..." has become a familiar sight. And so it should—PAS, which arranges low-cost abortions, has after all been using it for two years now.

The new poster "Who cares if you're pregnant?" is so similar that a passenger could easily skip over it as a continuation of the PAS campaign. Which is more than a little unfortunate, as the small print at the bottom reveals that the ad is for Lifeline, an anti-abortion counselling service with strong connections to Life.

PAS tell angry stories about women who have come to them

after trying Life. "They were in a depressed state having been shown highly emotive literature and told scaremongering tales about the future risk of sterility."

Same Thing?

Lifeline say that the posters are not alike, as they are different colours (theirs is dark brown as opposed to black) and have different words.

And the Advertising Standards Authority, to whom PAS complained on the grounds that the Lifeline ad was "intentionally misleading", would seem to agree, arguing that as the two organisations are in their view similar there is no reason why they shouldn't use similar advertising!

PAS have now written to Lord Drumalbin, chairman of the ASA, restating their case in even stronger terms. As their advertising agency put it, "This should be brought to the attention of the general public—even if it means going to Members of Parliament. We believe Lifeline is behaving in a totally immoral fashion." So what's new? □

Stephanie Markman

FOOTBALL SPECIAL

HULL: Karen Briggs won hands down when she took on over 100 boys in a show of football skill.

Using her feet, knees and head, she tapped the ball 1,439 times without it hitting the ground—the second best score was only 272!

First prize for a boy would have been a trial with Hull City. But that would never do—a £30 cash prize was swiftly substituted.

Karen belongs to a local boys' football team and to Hull's Judo Club—she's got nine medals and eight gold trophies. □

source: TGWU Record (her dad's in the TGWU!)

ADVENTURE TOURS CORRECTION

A mistake was made in the layout of the tribunal report in SR 51, page 17. The last two lines of column three should head the column—so it should read "even though the whole tribunal session rather took the shape of a misplaced woman driver joke". Sorry if you couldn't follow it.

If you're happy to be pregnant, fine—if not phone 409 0281.

Pregnancy Advisory Service, non-profit-making charity, 40 Margaret Street, W.I.

Who cares if you're pregnant?

222 6392

Lifeline Pregnancy Care Free confidential help and advice on how to cope with the problem pregnancy 30 Victoria Street London SW1

EAST LONDON: Hospital workers from the City and Hackney district held a half-day strike and march to a meeting at the Metropolitan Hospital as part of the London day of action against the cuts on September 23.

They were protesting against recently-announced cutbacks in jobs and facilities which include closure of children's and maternity wards.

The proposal to close the Mother's Hospital (see SR 51) has been replaced by that of closing the maternity wing of Hackney Hospital, and transferring obstetric services temporarily to the Mother's. Both proposals limit Hackney's maternity services even further.□

Contact East London Health Worker, 43 Allen Rd, N16 for details of further action.

LONDON: The staff of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital for women have voted unanimously to hold a "work-in" if the Area Health Authority carries out its threat to move the remaining inpatients elsewhere, as a final step towards closing the hospital.□

INTO THE GENTS

Why do women need supervision to perform essential bodily functions and not men? asks Maureen Gee. She was with her husband at London's Charing Cross Station late on August 11 when they both wanted to use the lavatory. Only the men's were open. A notice behind the locked glass doors of the women's offered as an alternative the public lavatories in Trafalgar Square.

"I had no intention of either using the alternative 'convenience' suggested by British Rail or suffering the discomfort of not using a lavatory at all—so I used the open and well attended men's lavatories, much to the surprise and horror of the men using them."

When she complained about this discrimination against women and small children she was told that women's lavatories need supervision—and men's don't.□

CRIPPLING ASSEMBLY LINE

AUSTRALIA: For fear of losing their jobs, women in factories are continuing to do work that makes them ill.

The most common complaint found by an industrial health unit set up by the Women's Community Health Centre in Liverpool, Australia is *tenosynovitis*—cramps and inflamed tendons caused by repetitive movement of fingers, hands and arms.

It is not a prescribed disease

in Australia, and if you look like being a long-term problem, you're sacked. So many women keep it quiet and carry on, until they're too crippled to work any longer.□ People's News Service

DROWNING THEIR LAUGHTER

Yes, but what do you do when men make remarks about you in public? Some of us pretend we haven't heard, and walk past with our noses in the air.

Carmella Lemaire, a 58-year-old lock-keeper's wife, took more positive action. To be precise, she threw a bowl of washing-up water over a boat load of men who were laughing at her legs.

And for that she was summoned to St Albans Crown Court—for damaging property and using threatening words and behaviour.

John Milton, captain of the boat cruising on the River Lea, said she shouted at them in Italian, banged the boat with a clothes prop, then slung dirty water over it.

She said she was hanging washing on the line when the boat came to the lock—"They saw my leg was uncovered and started shouting. They were drunk and started jeering at me for no reason. I picked up the bowl and threw it into their faces."

Ms Lemaire pleaded not guilty and got a three year conditional discharge. The men just got very, very wet.□

Striking against the cuts



WEST LONDON: Nurses from St Charles' Hospital in Ladbrooke Grove were out leafletting and petitioning on September 23, telling local people how the cuts will affect their hospitals.

The nurses have formed themselves into an association and worked out a plan of action with St Mary's Hospital in Paddington.

They're protesting against a management decision to cut the intake of student nurses from 560 to 450 by the end of the year. They say patients will suffer because staff nurses can't do their job properly without sufficient student back-up. And they're afraid nurses now in training won't be offered jobs when they qualify.

The district health authority says it's only carrying out government policy, and claims to be doing so without causing any redundancies—which simply means recruiting fewer students and not replacing staff who leave.□

BIG FLAME PHOTOS

SHORTLIST

Please send information to **Anny Brackx, Shortlist** Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh St., London W1A 4XS.

events

Events are listed chronologically

A Woman's Right To Choose Concert

A folk concert with Frankie Armstrong, Saffron Summerfield, Jo-Ann Kelly and Carol Rumens at the Old Theatre, London School of Economics, Houghton St, London WC2 on October 20. Tickets for this fundraising event are available at 80p in advance from A Woman's Right To Choose Campaign, 88a Islington High St, London N1 (01-359 5200) or at £1 on the door.

Getting Into The Law

The Rights For Women Unit is planning two one-day courses, intended for trade unionists, social workers, citizen's advice bureau and law centre workers as well as lawyers. Equal pay and sex discrimination in employment will be dealt with under 'Advocacy In The Industrial Tribunal' on October 21; and sex discrimination in other areas (housing, education, credit facilities) on November 4 under 'Advocacy In The County Court'. Both courses will take place at Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1, from 9.30-5. The fee for one course is £16 and for both £30. Programmes from the Women's Rights Officer, National Council for Civil Liberties, 186 King's Cross Rd, London WC1.

Judges And Gender

Albie Sachs (Univ. of Southampton) will talk about male sexism 1870-1976, on October 22 at the WRRRC, 158 North Gower St, London NW1.

The New Legislation

How far do the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts help women at work? The North London Working Women's Charter Groups are organising a day-conference on the Acts and how to use them, on October 23, from 10-5 at Kingsway College, Sidmouth St, London WC1. Registration 50p; creche 20p per family. Write to Catherine Powloski, 38 Corbyn St, London N4 (01-263 2092).

And More Law

Women In Media seminar on the working of the Sex Discrimination Act, to be held at Bedford College, Regent's Park, London NW1 (Tuke Hall) on October 23. Workshops on childcare, sexism in education, discrimination in jobs, protective legislation and the operation of the Equal Opportunities Commission. The fee is

£3 per person, which includes buffet lunch, creche and tea. Advance booking only. Apply to Women In Media, 103 Elgin Crescent, London W11.

International Socialist Feminism

There will be a planning meeting for a conference in Paris, with representatives of several European countries. It will take place on October 23/24 in London. For confirmation of dates and place phone Barbara Yates (01-212 5081 day).

Work

"We shall be discussing the increasing activity and demands for equal pay and opportunity, and the wider questions affecting women's ability to work — such as childcare, paid maternity leave, contraception and abortion and the effect of the present crisis on these struggles". A Communist Party conference on October 23/24 in Birmingham. Details from the Women's Dep, CP, 16 King St, London WC2.

Political Economy

The Political Economy Of Women Group will talk about their research on October 24. The meeting will start at 2.30 at Essex Rd Women's Centre, 108 Essex Rd, London N1 (01-226 9936).

Sexual Politics

The International Socialists are organising a series of "education meetings" on sexual politics. The next one will take place on October 28 and is on personal life and capitalism; speaker Joy Leman. On November 11 Gerry Matthews will talk about the Abortion Campaign and what we can do now. At the Roebuck Pub, 108a Tottenham Court Rd, W1, starting at 7 pm.

Women's Studies

A discussion on women's studies will take place in London on October 29 with a view to organising a conference on the politics of research. Details from Diana Barker (01-858 3045).

Scottish Conference

The Scottish Women's Liberation Conference will be held from October 29-31 at the Rosevale Centre, Rosevale St, Patrick, Glasgow. Details of the workshops will be circulated later. It is important to register in advance. The cost, which includes breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday, will be £2.50 and 50p for children. The accommodation will be in a church hall (floor space), so bring warm clothes

and a sleeping bag. Write to the Glasgow Women's Liberation Group, c/o 53 St Vincent Crescent, Glasgow, Scotland.

Fun For Trico's

Have fun and raise money for the women at Trico's, who have been on strike for equal pay for the last five months. Benefit on October 30 from 7.30pm with The Derelicts rock band with Kartoon Klowns theatre group. At the Tabernacle off Powis Sq, London W11. Entrance 60p (Claimants and housewives 50p).

Women In Eastern Europe

A working conference planned for October 30 at Birmingham University. Over the last few years, several Eastern European countries have restricted the right of women to abortion; Poland and the Soviet Union are introducing wage schemes for child-upbringing... The implications of these new policies for the position of women will be discussed. Further information from Barbara Holland, CREES, Birmingham University, Birmingham. Registration: 50p.

Nurseries

The National Nursery Campaign is holding a day-school on October 30. Topics for discussion include types of provisions for the under-fives, government policy, the situation in other countries and fighting the cuts. It will take place at the Centre for Environ-

campaign and its proposed charter contact 214 Stapleton Hall Rd, London N4 (01-735 1024).

Linking Midlands Women

Birmingham Women's Liberation are co-ordinating a regional conference for October 30/31 in Centre 13, School Rd, Moseley, Birmingham 13. It will be a weekend with workshops on art, music, health, abortion as well as films, a picnic and a disco. There will be a creche and accommodation and meals will be provided. Register in advance (£1.50).

Menstruation

A medical specialist will initiate a discussion on problems related to the menstrual cycle, on November 6, 2.30 pm, at the Swedenborg Hall, 20 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1. Details from the National Assembly Of Women, 283 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1.

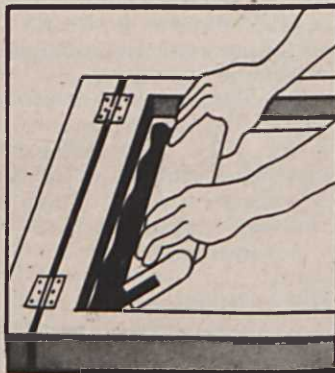
Abortion And Trades Unions

A one day conference for trade union delegates taking place on November 20 at the City University, St John St, London EC1. For details and delegates credentials contact A Woman's Right To Choose Campaign (Abortion Law Reform Association) as above.

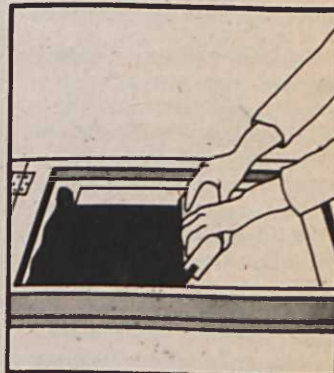
posters

How To Screenprint

A set of four wallcharts, explaining how to construct the equipment, how to make simple and photographic



3. Take the squeegee in both hands, collecting all the ink up in front of it.



4. Make one firm even pull towards yourself with the squeegee tilted at an angle of 45°.

From How To Screenprint

mental Studies, 62 Chandos Pl, London WC2. The fee is £1.50. This includes discussion papers. Write to Jane or Sue, 18 Finsbury Park Rd, London N4 or phone Ros (01-985 4792).

Homeworkers

The London Homeworkers Campaign has its inaugural meeting on October 30, 10-1 at Argyl St Community Centre, London WC1. There will be a creche. Individuals and groups who are interested in the

stencils and finally how to print. In addition there is a list of materials and shops to get them from. The charts are available from Chris Treweek, 34 Oakfield Rd, London N4 at £5 + 50p postage.

centres

South East London

The new women's centre in Thurlow House, Weighton Rd,

London SE20 will be open four times a week. Times still have to be fixed and volunteers are welcome. Contact Pam (01-677 2667 Tues-Sat, 10-6)

Bristol

Bristol Women's Centre is moving to 44 The Grove (off Prince St), Bristol 1 (Bristol 22760). They now have two big rooms on the ground floor, and are the sole occupants of the building, so that there is parking space for prams, push-chairs, bikes and cars.

Rights Of Women

Free legal advice evenings run by women for women, on housing, divorce, separation, custody, employment, social security, sex discrimination, rape etc. Wednesdays, 7-9 pm at 2 St Paul's Rd, London N1 (01-359 5185).

campaigns

Sexuality

A group of mainly East London women are meeting in an attempt to work out ways to campaign around the sixth demand of the Women's Liberation Movement: An end to discrimination against lesbians — the right to our own self-defined sexuality. Contact Helen Hewland (01-790 4304) for more information.

plays

Womankind

This pantomime, compiled and performed by the Birmingham-based company Banner, can be seen on October 23 at The Star Club, Essex St, Birmingham. "As with all our productions *Womankind* is based on actuality — evidence of real events and real people. The words are all in rhyme, but we intersperse the action with quotations from newspapers and advertisements. All our plays contain a lot of songs and music." The company can be contacted via John Fryer, 28 Selbourne Rd, Birmingham B20 2DW (021-523 7223).

American Fringe

Some American women who've been doing theatre work with women in a Federal Prison, street theatre in Harlem and now live on a women's farm, are in London until November 9 with video. They are keen to share their experiences. Contact them through Rosie Brennan, 167 Herbert Rd, London SE18 (01-854 8636).

art

Enquiries/Inquiries

Susan Hiller is showing her work *Enquiries/Inquiries* at the Serpentine Gallery, Hyde Park, London from November 25-December 3. Comparing British and American cultural "reality" she asks us to contemplate, reject or accept what society defines as "facts". On November 30 she'll be talking about ideas on ritual with Sheila Korn and Marc Chaimovitz as part of the Art and Anthropology series at the Institute for Contemporary Art, Nash House, 12 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1.

Art Resources

The Mooncow Gallery at the Women's Free Arts Alliance is exhibiting until November 10 "Sketchbooks. Workbooks and Visual Journals — a showing of the very personal and vital imagery about how women work, where they get their inspiration, and how they record their ideas."

The WFAA is also opening a bookshop and library. "The object of the library is to document women's creative/cultural endeavours and provide materials to support the women's school programs". In the bookshop women will be able to sell "the products of their thought and labour". For further information contact Kay Stirling (01-836 6306) or write to the WFAA, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1.

Women's Week at Drill Hall
January 24-29 at Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St, London WC1, a new arts centre run by Action Space. Any women interested in performing, exhibiting or giving workshops please contact Pam Kirk (01-637 7664).

journals & articles

Vindicacion Feminista

The first issue of this Spanish feminist magazine was published in July. Topics range from women guerrilla fighters in the Sahara to Spain's economic situation and international politics. Some of the writing tends to be a bit obscure and long-winded thus threatening its mass appeal. But there are some very interesting articles on abortion, divorce, a nurses' strike and conditions women suffer in Spanish jails. It also provides practical information: names and addresses of women's groups and an explanation of the new reform laws, affecting women.

The layout is rather monotonous and there is not much

visual support which makes the glossy full page colour ads for soap and perfume stand out even more. This worried me somewhat. But in a country like Spain with a heavily patriarchal culture backed up by an authoritarian church and state, the publication of such an outspoken magazine with strong, libertarian and feminist ideals is an exciting breakthrough.

Available from Sociedad General Espanola de Libreria, Evaristo San Miguel, 9, Madrid-8. Price 80 pesetas (66p) per copy.

Begonia Tamarit

Young Socialist

A quarterly magazine for children, covering current affairs, history and the arts in an accessible language and cartoon form. The Autumn issue includes the story of a Vietnamese boy, an article on the International Brigade, a visit to an artist's studio and a report of three boys exploring the country around Loch Lomond.

It is published by the Socialist Fellowship, an organisation specifically for working class children; and produced by women. It seems a shame that the only way in which girls feature in the magazine is as writers of encouraging letters.

A year's subscription costs 60p. Write to Edith Findley, 50 Dungleigh Square, East Kilbride G74 4EN.

pamphlets

Women's Liberation, An Introduction

What is it? How did it start? What are the aims? What do Women's Liberation Groups do? This pamphlet provides concrete answers and cuts through the distortions created by the media. "It doesn't contain a complete list of groups, campaigns or publications; instead it aims to guide you to reasonably accessible sources of information, through which you can follow up your own particular interests". 5p + sae from the London Women's Liberation Workshop, 38 Earlham St, London WC2 (01-836 6081).



From *Sexism In Children's Books*

Sexism in Children's Books

An essential collection of articles and guidelines to combat sexism. For teachers, librarians, publishers and parents. 60p + postage from Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 14 Talacre Rd, London NW5 3PE.

Battered Women

This nine-page pamphlet, written by Elizabeth Wilson of Camden Women's Aid, looks critically at current research into the extent and causes of domestic violence, particularly Dr Jasper Gayford's research, which has been so sympathetically received by the popular press.

Elizabeth Wilson argues for the National Women's Aid Federation that the government has a vested interest in keeping the family intact, and that is it therefore "likely to shy away from research into battered women that emphasises social problems and research that criticises the family as a social institution." She continues that the government looks "with favour on research which concentrates on the behaviour of individuals and stresses the shortcomings of 'abnormal', 'bad' families". It is in this light that we must interpret the popularity of the Gayford research, which identifies the women interviewed as case studies rather than as part of a wider social phenomenon.

In addition to looking more closely at specific inadequacies in Gayford's methods, the publication also provides a useful introduction to the more general subject of objectivity vs subjectivity in research.

The Existing Research Into Battered Women is available from the National Women's Aid Federation, 51 Chalcot Rd, London NW1. Price 15p + post. Stephanie Markman

IRISH

DEREK BOWIE



Mairead Corrigan (*left*), one of the leaders of the peace movement, reaches out to a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, back-up force to the British Army

Army raid in the Ardoyne, Easter 1976



DEREK BOWIE

FOREIGN NEWS

CARRIZOSA AND BRIGHT



Colombia: Botched up Abortion

Urban conditions in Columbia are among the worst in Latin America, with thousands of abandoned children roaming the streets. Abortion is illegal, but one women's hospital in the capital, Bogota, treats one case of septic abortion for every three live births. Twenty years ago it recorded one septic abortion for every eight live births.

It is this, rather than any awareness of a woman's right to choose, that is making abortion a public issue there. More liberal legislation is being discussed, but Colombia's Catholic bishops are particularly reactionary, and oppose any reform.

Even if such legislation were introduced, it would not provide ordinary people with adequate health care, which today is reserved for the rich. Women with money can buy contraceptives, and have abortions if necessary in private clinics or abroad.

The anti-abortion campaign in the establishment's press led Eulalia Carrizosa and Sara Bright, who live in Bogota, to investigate the abortion situation. They report:

We began our research at the biggest gynaecological hospital in

Bogota. Its director, once conservatively opposed to abortion,

has since converted to a more rational view, due to his daily contact with the problem. He and the staff, who include some Spanish nuns who have also changed their attitude, helped us a lot.

As our research progressed we became involved with more women who had been quietly and individually preoccupied with women's rights, as we had. We were surprised to realise how many of us had held the same views in isolation.

Stench of Infection

Our first visit to the hospital was horrifying. We were led to a darkly lit ward through draughty corridors littered with piles of bloody sheets from the night before. As we peered into the vast maternity wards we were amazed to see the sub-human conditions women have to put up with.

There are often two women, or even four people—two mothers and their new-born babies—in one narrow bed. In a far away corner is the "Septics" ward. As we entered we were overcome by the nauseating stench of infection. The ward was crowded with mostly young patients suffering the effects of septic abortions. Many were in the last stages of infection (septicemia) and some were dead when we returned a couple of days later to take more photographs.

Our second visit was less traumatic and we were more at ease with them. We were able to get closer and even managed to talk to some of these frightened women. It was clear that we would be unable to ask about their abortions, since we knew from the doctors and nurses that these women would rather die with a catheter or knitting needle in their abdomen insisting they had done nothing to provoke an abortion, than admit to this criminal offence: they simply insist that they fell off a bus or lifted a heavy load.

Last Resort

There were 6,500 cases of botched up abortion dealt with at this one hospital last year. Abortion accounts for 60% of maternal deaths here. Women normally go to hospital only when the symptoms of infection and the pain become unbearable. By then the sepsis has reached such a degree it's almost uncontrollable.

As abortion is a crime, there are obviously no precise statistics of the number practised annually in Colombia. A reliable estimate is around 280,000. □

Eulalia and Sara would like to receive any spare pamphlets, books and information on abortion and other women's issues, and to contact feminist groups. Write to Apartado Aereo 2758, Bogota, Colombia.

IN A SPANISH JAIL

September 16 saw the start of the third year of imprisonment without trial for Eva Forest and Maria Luz Fernandez (see SR 38).

Eva Forest, radical psychiatrist, writer and active feminist, and Maria Fernandez, librarian at the Cuban Embassy, were originally picked up in connection with the bombing of the Cafe Rolando on 13 September 1974.

They are now being held for alleged complicity in the assassination in 1973 of Carrero Blanco, the Spanish Prime Minister.

Other women arrested with them, including Lidia Falcon, founder of the Barcelona women's group, have since been released on bail. The evidence against these two is just as flimsy.

Fascist Police

To convince Western Europe that it's well on the road to democracy, the Spanish government has declared an amnesty, but so far only 180 of an estimated 2,000 "official" political

prisoners have been released.

The government claims to oppose arrests leading to indefinite detention, but it can't or won't curb the fascist police force. So, as in many South American countries, people are arrested, tortured, sometimes maimed for life, then released without charges a few days later.

One of many women subjected to this treatment was Maria Ampora Arangoa, a worker in a paper factory in Navarra, arrested on April 21.

Forcing a Confession

Her entire body was punched and beaten. Her head was repeatedly ducked in a bathtub full of dirty water, vomit and excrement until she lost consciousness.

She was made to undress and beaten with a wet towel and a rope on the soles of her feet, her thighs and buttocks.

Early next morning she was transferred to a hospital where medical reports state she was suffering from severe bruising and kidney damage.

The police said they wanted her to confess to being a member of the workers' commissions, the free—but still illegal—trade unions. No evidence was found against her.

Because Maria Arangoa dared speak out about her torture, and had photos taken, her case got world-wide publicity. The government announced that the officer responsible had been fired. Yes, but immediately, reinstated in the same position in a large barracks in a town 20 miles away.

AMNESTY



Maria Amparo Arangoa

Since Franco's death a year ago, the Spanish women's movement has been able to organise, albeit in semi-clandestinity. At "The Barcelona Days for Women", their conference in May, over 5,000 women issued a statement supporting the general call for amnesty for all prisoners held, like Eva Forest, for "ideological reasons".

They want this extended to include those held for "offences" relating to abortion, contraception, adultery and prostitution, whom they consider to be equally political prisoners of a fascist state. □

Sandra McNeill

Contact Free Eva Forest Campaign, c/o 38 Earham St, London WC2.

JAM IN HOLLAND

Dutch women held their first national festival in Amsterdam on September 11. Bea Campbell went over:

The eight members of Jam Today, Britain's new women's rock band, walked into Amsterdam's "Vrouwenhuis" (women's house) open-mouthed. It was so spacious, with food, a bar, music, somewhere to sleep—such organisation!

They'd arrived to play at Holland's first national women's liberation festival, planned at high speed once the idea of a celebration party came up after a successful abortion clinic occupation in May.

The abortion issue has rocked more than one European government lately. In Holland abortion is technically illegal but often performed in clinics. The issue came to a head in April when right-wing Catholic justice minister Van Agt threatened to resign from the coalition government unless all abortion clinics were closed down before new legislation was discussed.

He decided to send police in to close the Bloemenhove clinic in Heemstede, a particular target for anti-abortionists because of its long association with the birth control movement.

When this news got out, women and men rushed to defend the clinic. After two weeks it was clear that the debate would start with the clinics still



Celebrating in an Amsterdam park on September 11

open—so someone suggested a victory celebration.

Welding

The planning group was based in the "Vrouwenhuis", an old school squatted three years ago. It's never been fully developed as a women's centre, as the movement has been as disparate politically as ours has here.

The organisers felt the festival had been instrumental in welding the elements together. "Abortion was a de-stabilising issue for the government, but it was very stabilising for women," said one. "It was a great linking thing."

Another familiar problem was whether to exclude men. It was

agreed that the first half of the festival, in a lovely willow-lined park, would be open to everyone, while the evening in the Vrouwenhuis would be for women only.

Acrobats, street theatre, political stalls—in all 2,000 people—filled the park, and in the evening 1,500 packed the school to hear famous classical soloists and women from three orchestras who got together for the occasion to play rumbas and tangos.

Jam Today took the stage last and thrilled the audience, who'd never heard anything like it. It was all so successful that there's bound to be another national festival. □

FEMINIST THEATRE?

On September 3 a group of feminist women disrupted the Late Night Cafe Show at Kundry's Theatre, home of the Scottish Women's Company (see review on page 40). They explain why:

In their inaugural press release the Scottish Women's Company claim to be "supporting and encouraging women who work in the theatre and related arts".

Until Friday 3rd many Edinburgh feminists, paid and unpaid, supported the theatre, working there in blatantly stereotypical jobs. We consciously compromised ourselves on the understanding that it was only a potential women's company hurriedly put together for the

Festival, although the discrepancies between their PR and their practices were huge.

The only male actor, Sean McCarthy, is paid 50% more than the five women who are acting.

A qualified and experienced woman lighting technician offered to work for nothing on three occasions. Once she was allowed to wire chairs together.

Amused Disbelief

A one-woman feminist show was turned down for the lunchtime and late night shows. A rock band, a sickeningly sexist male poet and a bawdy French commedienne were used instead.

We stayed, because of the feminist content and power of *Dead Fish* and *Guinivere*, until one of us actually saw the Late Night Cafe Show on Thursday night.

Alan Jackson, the poet, read a North American Indian "poem" relating their version of the

vagina dentata (toothed vagina) myth: man brutally fucks woman all night until he has broken all the teeth in her vagina, whereupon she thanks him for teaching her humility.

On Friday morning six women resigned when the rest of the company reacted to their/our anger and pain with amused disbelief that we could be upset by Art. Recognising that some late night show had to go on, we offered to replace Alan Jackson with women poets and singers. We were refused. We said either he left or we would take over his performance.

That night six women walked onto the stage and asked him to take his turn in the kitchen; he refused. He said he was an embodied spirit and the police were called. When the audience voted in favour of our woman singer attempting to continue, the male organiser of the late show closed it down. □

Edinburgh Women's Liberation

WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIBRATORS

As the first company to introduce vibrators into the U.K. and having sold some hundred of thousands, we feel that we know more about them and their use than most.

The most important thing to remember is, **that they do work** — providing the woman has no violent prejudice against the use of artificial sexual stimulation. Some women find the shape off-putting. The phallic symbolism, deliberately created by the makers to emphasize its sexual usage, gives them the impression that it is meant to be used as an artificial penis, and indeed it can and is so used. Some women, however, find the effect — when used in this way — to be more numbing than stimulating.

The vibrator is designed and is far more effective when used for clitoral stimulation and its undoubted value for this purpose has been well established by Masters and Johnson in their book "An Analysis of Human Sexual Response." In the book they describe how, using a similar device, they were able to bring to orgasm women who have never before reached a climax.

These were extreme cases obviously. Normally, the vibrator is used to provide extra stimulation during love making and is particularly useful where the woman's response tends to be slow. And, of course, it is just as often used purely for personal pleasure.

Finally a word about quality. There are many different makes on the market today, all of similar design, ranging in quality from very good to absolutely useless. We have been selling the same model for seven years and have enough confidence in it to offer you our special 'money refund' service if you are not satisfied.

If you want to experiment with your own personal vibrator, just complete the coupon below.

Please send me a Harmony Personal Vibrator.
I enclose Cheque/P.O./Cash for £3.50 (including postage and packing).

Name:

Address

Please
PRINT
Clearly

**Pellen Personal Products Ltd.,
Dept SR
1a West Green Road, London, N.15**

Be Business-Like About Business Exams

Business examinations are the key to your future, so make sure you pass them quickly and easily... with a Rapid Results College home study course. Our carefully planned tuition, with 45 years of success behind it, will give you the vital help necessary to pass Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administration, Institute of Marketing, L.L.B. degree and Accountancy exams first time.

Write today for full details of our courses to:
The Careers Adviser,
The Rapid Results College,
Dept. IC2, Tuition House,
London SW19 4DS. Tel: 01-947 7272.

(24-hour recording service —
01-946 1102 — for prospectus
only)
Accredited by the C.A.C.C.

CLA

PUBLICATIONS,
BOOKSHOPS, ETC.

SAPPHO lesbian/feminist magazine. 50p incl post. Basement, 20 Dorset Sq, NW1. Meetings every Tuesday 7.30 pm Chepstow Pub, Chepstow Place, W2.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION WORKSHOP (Women's Information and Newsletter Service), 38 Earlham St, London WC2 (01-836 6081). Open usually 12-10 pm weekdays, 12-6 Sat. Feminist information centre and meeting place. Books and publications, women's groups, referral services, coffee room, meeting rooms, resident film and art groups. Weekly newsletter (including calendar). Subscription 15p a copy, 10p at the Workshop. Run by an open collective. For women only.

THE GIRLS' GUIDE—1976 FOR GAY WOMEN. Annual pocket size international bar/club guide and complete directory. This third edition: 2000 listings/40 countries, £2 only from THE GIRLS' GUIDE, 1 North End Rd, London W14 (mail order only—one week delivery). Also at: Sterling's Bookstore, WC2 and Symposium Bookstore, 12 Market St, Brighton.



Every sex maniac should get it

It's bound smooth and brown, yet very slim and handy. (6 3/4" x 3 1/4"). This 1977 Sex Maniac's Diary is made for the 1977 Sex Maniac to whip from the pocket or handbag and refer to at anytime during the day or night.

Not only does it contain a love position for every day, this year there's a Kink of the Week every week. What a way to sort your friends out! The enormous reference section lists astrological sex matching and predictions for 1977: the world's most romantic hotels and sexy clubs. The sex games are written specifically for middle-aged mooners, slick city dwellers, suburbanites and country bumpkins. So, the Sex Maniac's Diary will even be an appropriate gift

for your naughty granny in Devon!

Bigger and better is the International Sex Maniac's Desk Diary 1977 — a hefty 8 1/2" x 6 1/2" with the most divinely designed pages. This is the present for the real enthusiast, the traveller, the dreamer.

There within its pages are the secrets of 87 cities' night life, essential astrology, a useful listing of erotic gifts and the most

hilarious Sex Maniac Award section. The diary is adorned with love positions and erotic aphorisms.

Never has so much sauce been presented in such immaculate taste. Make sure that every Sex Maniac Friend of yours gets a pocket or desk diary for Christmas, and make sure it's a Sex Maniac's Diary.

Fill in the coupon — we'll do the rest.

To Executive Distributors (Sales) Ltd, 2 Godstone Rd Whyteleafe Surrey

Please send me... Pocket Diaries at £1.75 — Desk Diaries at £4.00

by cheque/PO made out to Executive Distributors (Sales) Ltd

Prices include VAT and P&P

(please print)

Name

Address

I am over 18 yrs old (signed)

SR

CLASSIFIEDS

Gerda Boyesen
Centre for Bioenergy

Institute of
Biodynamic Psychology

TOWARDS CONSCIOUS BIRTH — LECTURE SERIES

November 12th: Before Conception—Vicki Mogilner.

November 19th: A Child is Born—Leboyer film. Lecture and discussion by Kate Russell—midwife.

November 26th: Posture and Birth-relating to the Alexandre technique by Isobel McGilvray.

December 4th: Pre-Birth, Birth and Re-Birth—David Boadella.

All lectures begin at 8.00 p.m.

The Centre is launching a totally new programme
"Towards Conscious Birth" commencing in January.

Full details available from the Centre of Bioenergy,
Acacia House, Centre Avenue, The Vale, Acton Park,

London W3 7JX

Telephone: 01-743 2437



BOOKSHOPS, ETC.

RIISING FREE left-wing bookshop have moved to 155 Drummond St, London NW1. Large selection of radical women's literature with mail order service.

WIRES is the National Women's Liberation Information and Referral Service. Send all your information and queries to us and keep in touch with the movement by subscribing to the newsletter (twice monthly). Rates: individual subs £5 a year (£3 for poorer sisters); Group subs £3 a quarter—6 newsletters. £12 a year; each additional newsletter 50p for 3 months supply. Send cheques/POs and donations payable to WIRES c/o 30 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2, T:LDS 35561 (just ask for WIRES, it's a shared phone).

THERAPY

PRIMAL THERAPY write Jenny James, Atlantis, Burtonport, Letterkenny, Co Donegal, Eire.

SEXUALITY AND YOU. A group for and about women. Starts 22 September. For details contact: Quaesitor, 187 Walm Lane, NW2. 01-452 8489.

Woman Psychotherapist (Jungian). Tel: 01-348 5593 preferably before 10 am.

COURSES

BELFAST. Women In society. A course of 20 lectures for any one interested in the ideas and history of Women's Liberation. Contact Extra-Mural Dept., Queens, Belfast.

Vicky Seddon and Han Lobstein are running a **SEX-ROLES WORKSHOP** October 29-31. Details from 222 Psalter Lane, Sheffield 11.

CONFERENCES

Conference: Physical Violence in the Family. Manchester, Wednesday-Friday, 17-19 November, 1976. Violence against women and children, its causes and incidence, how best to help all the individuals concerned will be the main items on the agenda of this conference. Speakers include a member of the parliamentary select committee, a lawyer, a psychiatrist, researchers and persons from Women's Aid. Applications should be sent to Elinor Kelly, Extra-Mural Studies, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL. Fees: resident £18, non-resident £15.

In case of financial difficulty, inquire about possible reductions.

Conference: Women's Studies. Manchester, Saturday-Sunday, 11-12 December, 1976.

This will be the first national conference on Women's Studies in Britain and everyone interested in teaching, organising and research in Women's Studies is invited to participate. The Conference will open with a symposium with three speakers discussing Women's Studies—its present development in Britain and abroad, its relevance to women in employment. Discussion groups around these and other themes will follow. On Sunday, participants can choose from twenty workshops which will deal with specialised issues—practical, political and academic.

Applications should be sent to Elinor Kelly, Extra-Mural Studies, University of Manchester M13 9PL.

Fees: resident £9.50, non-resident £6. In case of financial difficulty, inquire about possible reductions.

PERSONAL

Gay woman 40's seeks friendship with similar. 25 mile radius Southampton. Box 523.

Gay girl, 20, seeks similar for friendship Midlands area. Also penfriends anywhere. Box 522.

ATTRACTIVE young woman seeks similar **GAY/BISEXUAL** woman who loves animals and likes literature and arts. BRISTOL or Bath area or other areas. Box 521.

GIRL, 19, would love to meet similar. Interested: discotheques and general companionship. Box 513.

Homosexual? Lesbian? Problems? Ring the women at **FRIEND** to talk it over. Tuesdays, Fridays, 7.30 pm-10.00 pm on 01-359 7371.

GAY Switchboard, 01-837 7324, flats, flatshares, bedsits for gay women and men. Free service, help and other gay information. 24 hr. service.

SPREAD SPARE RIB AROUND

SPA'RE RIB BOP•DANCE•DANCE•DANCE•WITH THE DERELICTS•SATURDAY•NIGHT 20 NOVEMBER AND MONTHLY•AT STREET AID•29 SHELTON STREET IN THE BASEMENT LONDON

STICK IT UP!

NEW SPARE RIB PUBLICITY POSTER 23½" x 16½", black on bright pink background. Get your copies to publicise the magazine. Send name, address and postage.

2 copies 6½p
5 copies 11p
9 copies 17p
11 copies 20p
19 copies 32p
other rates on request.



JOB

COMEDIENNE, original, off-beat American and dirt cheap. Rock venues, discos, benefits, anything. Celebrate the Bicentennial by hiring mel 135 Pether-ton Rd, N5. 01-359 3150

FEMINIST TYPESETTER needs work. Cheap rates offered. Write to Mary, 2 Sunnyside, Liverpool 8.

Camden Women's Aid needs a general worker 3 or 4 days a week starting mid-October. Write giving details of relevant experience, c/o Camden Law Centre, 146 Kentish Town Rd, N.W.1.

Voluntary workers urgently wanted for Waltham Forest Women's Aid. 01-521 2554.

Community Action (Manchester) require long/short term workers, full/part time. Salary low, drivers preferred. Write C.A., Students Union, Oxford Rd., Manchester.

Women artists, designers and printers wanted to do occasional publicity work for Monstrous Regiment Theatre Company. Contact 485 3860.

EVENTS

North London Women's Disco every Saturday 8.30 pm at the Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd, N.1. Sorry no kids.

GROUPS

FRENCH WOMAN TEACHER in France, interested in writing and illustrating non-sexist stories for teaching English to French children 13 and 14 years old, seeks English women to participate. Germaine. Box 520.

New womens group has started in Croydon. Interested women contact Lorraine or Sandra at Caterham 47651.

COMMUNES

Wanted. Long-term members for communal group on 3 acre small-holding possibly co-ownership. Established gardens, goats, bees, poultry. Emphasis on getting away from sex roles. Hard-workers only. S.a.e. Jules Pantstylen Penegoes, Machynlleth, Powys.

Established community (5 years) seeks more members. Please write for further information, giving details to: Birchwood Hall, Storridge, Nr. Malvern, Worc.

COMMUNE. 4 adults and 3 children seek 1-2 adults. Nth London 340 4873.

ACCOMMODATION

One woman wanted to share house with one other on outskirts of East London. Phone Romford 21955.

Young lady (working) seeks s/c flat for herself and 2½ year old son. Any area. Approx £20. Tel. 0272 422697.

Accommodation wanted from March-April for man, woman, two small children in Nth London, preferably socialist, feminist commune. Box 525.

WORKING SINGLE PARENT plus baby seeks accommodation and working/living ideas with similar in London. Box 524.

English woman (29), separated with son (6) desperately wants to return to England and hopes to study. Problem: where to live? Please help. Sandy Walker, Richard-Wagner-Str. 1, 6 Frankfurt, West Germany.

DUBLIN. One parent family. Father/son (3½) would like to share accommodation, preferably south-side. Box 526.

Mother and 2-year-old want self-contained flat, Highbury, Holloway or Camden (1 room and large kitchen/living room and bathroom) share garden with other parents, mutual baby-sitting. Box 527.

FOR SALE. 6th share in group house, N.16. 2m, 3f, 2 cats. Into dance thesis, writing, personal growth. £2,500. Tel. 01-800 6871.

If you want to join or start a group, find work, a travel companion, or a missing friend, start a household or share a house, have something to sell or swap . . . then run your own Classified Ad.

COPY DATE: NOV 10 for DEC 8

Please send a large stamped envelope with all replies to Box numbers.

Rates: 10p per word, 15p caps, £1.50 for semi-display (semi-boxed ad.), 50p for Box numbers.

Payment: Ads must be prepaid and sent to Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS. Please make all cheques and POs payable to Spare Ribs Ltd.

Conditions: Spare Rib reserves the right to refuse any classified ads.

☐ Tick if Box number required. ☐ Tick if Semi-Display required

I enclose £ for no. of issues

NAME

ADDRESS

Print your ad below in block capitals, one word in each box. Underline any words you require in caps.

7		
10		
13		
16		
19		
22		
25		
28		
31		

Women are claiming the right to control their own fertility, to bear children in circumstances that make rearing them a creative act, or to choose abortion if they wish.

For the recent history of abortion law reform in Britain, and the issues in the current campaign, read Victor Greenwood and Jock Young's

ABORTION IN DEMAND

Introduced by Peter J. Huntingford, MD FRCOG
£1.65 paperback

PLUTO PRESS

Unit 10, Spencer Court
7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH
Telephone 01-722 0141



Woman? Wife? Mother?...

Ann Oakley

HOUSE WIFE

A fresh and rational challenge to the set of conventional values which label work a masculine activity and assign women to unpaid labour in the home.

Pelican 80p

also available now

THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF WOMEN

Edited by Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley
Pelican Original £1.25

"I work with such passion that it shuts out everything else."

On the centenary of her birth, Gillian Perry describes the work of Paula Modersohn-Becker who explored ways of painting unselfconscious, resilient images of women.



Few women in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century had the courage and the independence to defy middle-class convention and adopt painting as a full-time career. Even fewer had the artistic conviction to adopt an innovative style which was unacceptable to the majority of the art-buying public. Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876-1907) was a German artist who fought bravely for both these causes but personal disappointment and artistic and social isolation were the price she had to pay for her own independence. In 1906, she wrote from Paris: "In art one is usually totally alone with oneself."

Throughout her life she applied herself to her art with an almost fanatical dedication. In 1897, aged twenty-one, she wrote in a letter: "My whole week has consisted of nothing but work and inspiration. I work with such passion that it shuts out everything else." This passion, combined with an intense ambition to succeed, later demanded that she "shut out" much of her married life. She spent long periods in Paris between 1900 and her death, living and working away from her husband, Otto Modersohn, and their home in the north German artists' colony at Worpswede.

In Paris Paula found a more stimulating artistic environment

in which she could see the works of her favourite artists — the post-impressionists Gauguin, Cezanne and Van Gogh. At first these influences were combined in her work with the more traditional style of painting which she had learnt in the colony of Worpswede, consisting of rather sentimental semi-impressionistic landscapes known as "naturalistic" at the time. As her style developed she moved towards a more primitive two-dimensional style — towards what she called "great simplicity of Form". The crude simplicity and stark colours of her paintings of her favourite subjects, which included children, haggard peasants and mother and child studies (figs 2, 3), have caused her to be called a precursor of German Expressionism. This dramatic and introverted style of painting emerged in Germany during the first decade of the twentieth century and contained the germ of one of the most radical shifts in modern art — the move towards total abstraction. But despite her simplifications, Paula's paintings were always rooted in the reality around her. Her work-weary peasants and sorrowful children were to stand as symbols of what she herself called "poor little humanity".

Letters and Diaries

Today, one hundred years after her birth, Paula is only beginning to receive the recognition which she deserves. Despite her early death at the age of thirty-one, she achieved an enormous output of over four hundred paintings and at least one thousand drawings and graphic works. Although there is not yet a complete publication on her in English, her work is now well-documented in Germany, where many provincial exhibitions have been held in her honour. Paula's ideas on art and the problems she encountered in her struggle to achieve recognition as an artist in her own right are described in intimate detail in a remarkable series of letters and diaries. Unfortunately these have not yet been translated into English, although in Germany they have a literary status in their own right.

Paula's need to write a personal diary full of the most intimate revelations of her emotional states was shared by many women painters of her time. Some of the most famous diary writers include Kathe Kollwitz, a contemporary German painter; Marie Bashkirtseff¹, a young Russian girl living in Paris in the 1870s and 80s; and Dora Carrington², the English painter who lived with Lytton Strachey. Paula herself had read the diaries of Marie Bashkirtseff, and commented in her own diary in 1898: "Her thoughts have got into my blood, and they are making me so sad. Like her I find myself saying: When can I really be something!" Paula found that Marie shared both a similar determination to achieve recognition as a painter and a sense of frustration at the restrictions which society imposed on women. ►



Portrait of a Farmer's Wife, 1905.

For all of these women painters the diary seemed to fulfill (in varying degrees) a need to justify their career to society and describe their devotion to the cause of art.

Conflict with Parents

Paula Becker was born in Dresden in February 1876, the third of seven children in a respected middle-class family. Her father was a railway official and her mother came from an aristocratic German family. When Paula was twelve years old her family moved to Bremen where she began her first drawing lessons. Despite her obvious talent, Paula's parents insisted that she take a two-year teacher training course. This marked the beginning of a long conflict with her parents who were not enthusiastic about their daughter's determination to be a painter, and blindly accused her of being too egotistical. They were continually trying to persuade her to take a post as a governess, one of the few "respectable" careers for a single girl. Paula eventually won her battle to study art and went to the Berlin School of Art in 1897. But her victory demanded an increasing personal isolation. Two years later she wrote to her sister: "I can see that my aims will diverge more and more from yours, that they will mean less and less to you. But in spite of this I must follow them. I feel that everyone is frightened of me, yet I must continue further."

In the Summer of 1897, while on holiday from the Berlin Art School, she visited an artists' colony in the village of Worpswede, situated in the moors north of Bremen. The Worpswede community included many famous German intellectuals who were united in their rejection of capitalist industrialization, seeking their inspiration in the unsophisticated life of the peasants. It was here that Paula met her future husband Otto Modersohn, and two of her closest lifelong friends, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, and the sculptor Clara Westhoff, who later married Rilke.

Marriage

Otto Modersohn was eleven years older than Paula. He proposed to her in the Autumn of 1900, four months after the death of his first wife. Paula's family would no longer support her art studies, and were still pressurizing her to take a post as a governess. Although she did not feel that she was really ready for marriage she saw it as a solution to her problems and an opportunity to continue with her painting. The "career" of marriage would remove the need to take a post as a governess. But in 1901 after the marriage she writes of her disillusionment: "I have cried a lot in my first year of marriage . . . I feel as lonely as I did in my childhood . . . It is my experience that marriage doesn't make one happier. It destroys the illusion that had been the essence of one's previous existence, that there existed something like a soul-mate. . .

"The feeling of not being understood is heightened in marriage by the fact that one's entire life beforehand had the aim of finding a being who would understand one. But isn't it perhaps better to exist without such an illusion and look this great lonely truth straight in the eye?"

Paula was to face this truth in 1903, 1905 and 1906 when she made three different trips to Paris, each lasting several months. Here she felt free to develop her "great simplicity of form" unrestricted by the stylistic tastes of the Worpswede circle of artists. Despite the determination with which she pursued this goal in her painting, she was still shy and diffident about her work. She had always felt overshadowed by her husband whose naturalistic landscapes were more popular in Germany at the time. Even Rilke had once referred to her as "the wife of a famous German painter", and on her last trip to Paris in 1906 many of her acquaintances still did not realise that she was a painter. She took lessons at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and struck up a friendship with the German Bernard Hoetger. But she was often alone, shutting herself away with her work in her studio. Despite this she could only answer Otto's constant pleas to return home with the response: "Try to get used to the possibility that our lives can go on apart." Paula felt that she had to prove herself

to herself and to the outside world before she could comply with her husband's demands.

Shared Responses

Her relationships with Clara Westhoff and Rilke were no less problematic. Paula and Clara met in Worpswede in 1898 and became close friends. They spent much time together discussing their views on art and sharing similar emotional responses to nature. Clara encouraged Paula to make her first trip to Paris in 1900 when she herself was a pupil of the French sculptor Auguste Rodin and they often saw each other on Paula's successive visits. Although there is no evidence that the relationship was physical, Paula became emotionally very dependent on Clara and reacted dramatically when she married Rilke in 1901. Paula felt that as Rilke's wife Clara was neglecting her and accused Rilke of keeping his wife in chains. But Paula overcame her jealousy, and in 1905 while painting Clara's

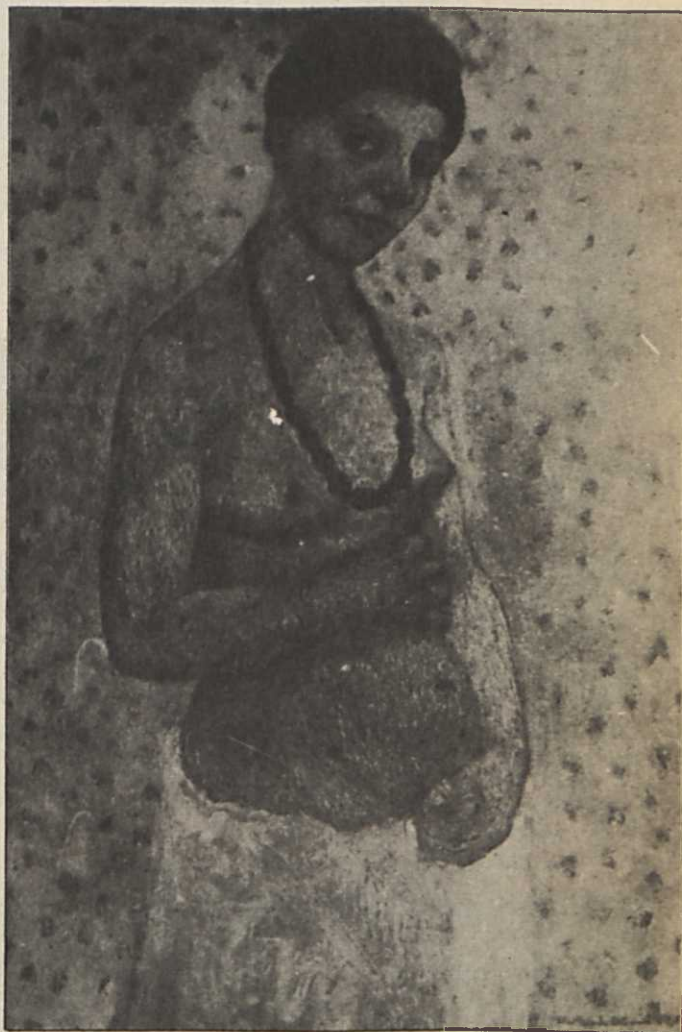
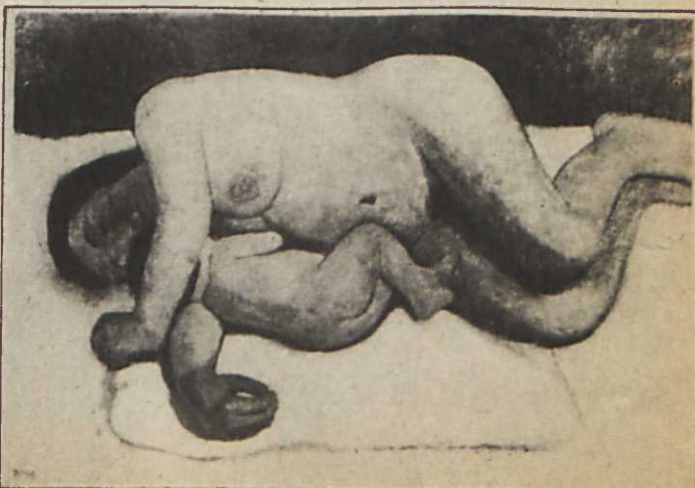


Fig. 6 Above: Self portrait on my sixth wedding anniversary

Fig. 2 Below: Mother and Child, 1906



portrait she wrote in a letter: "Despite everything, she is still the person that I love the most."

The nature of Rilke's reaction to Paula's jealousy is more ambivalent. Rilke and Paula had also become very close friends. When they first met on his visit to Worpswede in 1900, Rilke found in Paula an inspiration for much of his poetry. He often visited her studio where they would discuss their views on literature and art and it is possible that Rilke's



Fig. 3 Above: Workhouse Woman with a glass balloon

Fig. 5 Below: Mother and Child, 1907



sudden departure from Worpswede in October 1900 was provoked by the announcement of Paula's engagement to Otto. If Rilke had been hurt by this announcement this would also explain his lack of response to Paula's jealous accusations after his own marriage. But their later correspondence shows that their friendship lasted until Paula's death, which death so affected Rilke that he wrote a long poem inspired by his love for her. He called it "Requiem for a Friend".

But Paula never allowed the demands of her emotional life to undermine her work. She often felt burdened by domesticity in her Worpswede home, yet this was the environment which inspired some of her most famous paintings of peasants and farmers. She emphasised the heavily lined faces and haggard bodies of these people in works which are individual portraits rather than group studies. Although they do not reflect the deep social concern that we find in Kathe Kollwitz's moving depictions of mass working-class life in early twentieth century Germany, they do show an unsentimental realism which contrasted dramatically with the idealised studies of peasant life of the other Worpswede artists.

One of Paula's favourite subjects lived in the village workhouse. She was a short, fat old woman with hideous features whom Paula and Clara had nicknamed "Old Dreebehn". ("Dreebehn" was the local dialect for the German word "dreibeinig", meaning three-legged. The old woman had acquired a three-legged appearance by always leaning helplessly on her stick.) Old Dreebehn's gross animal-like proportions lent themselves perfectly to Paula's tendency to simplify and monumentalize her compositions, seen here in "Workhouse Woman with a Glass Balloon" (fig. 3).

New Images of Women

She was primarily concerned with the female role, and painted very few male subjects (her portraits of her husband Otto, of the German sociologist Werner Sombart, and of Rilke being notable exceptions). She constantly repeats the theme of mother and child in her work (figs. 2, 5). But her interpretation of this theme was far from the traditional nineteenth-century one in which the maternal role was often represented in a heavily sentimentalized or erotic manner. The monumental and protective figures of her paintings reflect a new concept of woman as a powerful figure in her own right. Paula's naked woman is no longer the passive "Odalisque" of Ingres or Delacroix whose pose suggests complete sexual availability. She is instead a powerful life-giver, who is often shown suckling her child at her breast.

Many of her portrait studies are self-portraits. Throughout her career as an artist she seems to have been exploring her identity as a woman. Just as Marie Bashkirtseff had searched for her identity by constantly gazing at herself in the mirror, Paula painted many self-portraits which reveal an intense process of self-examination.

Despite the restrictions which it would impose on her art, Paula had always longed to experience motherhood herself. This longing was such that in 1906, eighteen months before the birth of her only child, she painted a self-portrait in which she is visibly and heavily pregnant (fig. 6). In it she is holding her stomach as if to denote the sacred nature of this part of her body. Paula had always been fascinated by her own body which, as in this work, she saw less as a vehicle for sexual passion than as a force with the potential to produce and nurture life. The painting is a projection of her fantasies, but the fulfillment of these fantasies was to end in tragedy. When she eventually gave birth to her only child on the 2nd November, 1907, the strain of childbirth proved too much for her weak constitution. She died of a heart attack on the 21st November. Her last words were: "What a shame!"□

Acknowledgements:

Paula Modersohn-Becker: *Briefe und Tagebuchblätter* (Letters and Diaries), List, Munich.

G. Pauli: Paula Modersohn-Becker, Kurt Wolff, Leipzig.

P. Selz: German Expressionist Painting, University of California, Berkeley.

¹See Spare Rib 34 for Marie Bashkirtseff.

²See Spare Rib 31 for Dora Carrington.



"I feel I've come through the worst." Jenny and her son.

Women's Aid Refuges have provided a haven for thousands of battered wives and their children. Yet women have to leave at some point, and tackle an obstacle course of problems ranging from cramped and decrepit housing to the stigma of being husbandless. *Stephanie Markman* talks to three women who are building new lives against the odds.

Three Battered Women Face The Future

A

gnes is on the night shift.

"I work with a lot of men now.

I watch them all the time. I never go into the same room with the man I work with — I won't even go up a corridor with him. It's his hands; I always watch his hands. If I'm on my teabreak and the boss comes in, I jump. I go over to the window. I can talk to him as long as I'm away from him."

Then there's Chris. She's been living on her own with her kids for four months now. Shortly after they moved in a couple up the road started complaining about her children's behaviour: "They blamed my kids for everything because I didn't have a man. The woman said my kids wouldn't leave her kids alone. It was because I didn't have a husband behind me."

And Jenny. The council put her into an 1830's millworkers' cottage, where "the snow came in through the windows in winter" and "the place was so damp and cold that we got bronchitis. We couldn't live upstairs — we lived in one room with a bed. I was told by the council that if I refused it there would be nothing else for two months, and then it could be even worse." Yet she was given a transfer to a better home only *two weeks* after she finally started fighting for one: "Students down the road complained about their place, and the council did it up for them. They would have done the same for me if I'd had the confidence to make a fuss, if I hadn't been so isolated."

Agnes, Chris and Jenny all live in different parts of the country — as far apart as Scotland and the South Coast. Agnes is in her forties, with five daughters, one of them already out at work. Jenny and Chris are both in their late twenties, but there the similarity ends; Jenny took a degree and worked for some years before finally getting married two years ago, while Chris got married at 18 and worked part-time in between having her three kids. Yet the way they live, the people they mix with, the things they care about and talk about, are all remarkably alike. It's as though you could draw a line through some point in their lives and label the two parts 'before' and 'after', like in the television commercials. Except that for once it would actually ring true.

The watershed in these women's lives was that they all left their husbands. They left because they were being physically or mentally battered (Agnes for a staggering, though by no means unusual, 12 years), and they went to women's aid refuges, from where they were eventually rehoused. Which means that they're all living alone with their kids now, all in various stages of divorce and all having to cope on their own.

"Two Houses"

It would seem, from the outside, to be a particularly isolating way to live, and if the women do not find it so it is largely because of the bond they keep with their former refuges. Jenny, for instance, always goes back for a visit when she feels depressed. "and after five minutes I'm all right, because I'm totally accepted. We have this thing in common, our understanding of our situation . . . we need each other very badly."

Agnes has maintained particularly close links in the two years since she moved out and has even worked there part-time; she talks of having "two houses", and, like Chris, who goes out with the women from her refuge every Monday night, her social life is centred around it. Asked if she ever feels lonely, she denies it vigorously: "I can always go to any one of five houses around here. I knew I wasn't alone as soon as I stepped into the refuge. You're all like one big family. You and the kids have got somebody. All these years you've had nobody."

"However bad the refuge is, it was better than what I came from," says Jenny. Agnes echoes this: "I was too glad to come in to complain about the conditions. I was too happy just to be safe." But that can't hide the fact that a refuge is by no means a very easy or comfortable place to stay. Chris, particularly, had a hard time there; she'd been on anti-depressants and sleeping tablets for two months before she left her husband, and her nerves were in no state to take the inevitably rough conditions of refuge life. "When you're in with a crowd of women it always has its problems. You're not in a state of mind to put up with a lot of kids. It used to get very bad at mealtimes." Her reaction to the situation was to develop what she called "an awful temper. I used to shout at the kids in the refuge. You don't want them around crying all the time. And there's always kids crying, even if they're not yours."

"Your new personality dies"

Significantly, she calmed down as soon as she moved into her own house, even though she found it difficult at first to cope with living alone: "I've always been frightened of the dark. I used to have to go to bed when the children did, at eight o'clock. Now a few neighbours come in and I don't go to bed till ten."

For Jenny there were also serious problems to be overcome when she moved into her own place; for though, like Chris, she found refuge life an unbearable strain on her nerves, the council cottage was by no means a rest-cure itself. "I thought that when I got rehoused it would be all right. I'd have my own little place . . . instead it was a total shock. The place was disgusting — we couldn't live in it. After living here for a week I left, and went to stay with a friend." She stresses the importance of somewhere decent to live when building up a new life: "I didn't feel I could invite people back here. You've got to be able to re-establish a social life. If you're faced with poverty and bad accommodation, it's hopeless. Your new personality dies."

What Jenny sees as "re-defining yourself socially" has undoubtedly been important to all three women. To some extent this is natural after such a drastic change in life-style; as Chris puts it, "you make a different sort of friends, you've got different things to talk about." But it is also a response to the "stigma" of being a battered woman.

For Agnes, being in the refuge meant a move from total isolation to merely partial. At one time she could confide in no-one — "I couldn't talk to other people about the battering. It's amazing how many other people were going through it. You thought you were alone, you thought you were a freak or something" — whereas now she feels she can talk to women who've been through the same experience, but no-one else. "You are cut off from outsiders. You've only the refuge people. I can't tell anyone about being in the refuge or about being battered. I don't know what people would think. Maybe next year I'll have the courage . . ." And as for minding — "I was cut off for seventeen years. I'm used to it," she says.

New Friends

For Chris, it becomes a question of avoiding pity. "When you first go to the refuge you feel sorry for yourself, but then you learn to stand on your own two feet and you don't want people to be sorry for you. I slightly keep in touch with old friends, but I cut off from them when I went to the refuge. I knew they meant well, but it was all 'we ought to do things because she's away from her husband'. And then you feel terrible because you've rebuffed them when they offered help."

So she's made new friends, both among the women in the refuge and with her new neighbours. "I never felt ashamed, though. I just felt a bit awkward. I sometimes feel I couldn't face the people I used to know."

Jenny, although she now feels able to see her old friends again ("I've got my own social life, my own identity, my own house, so I'm able to meet these people on a different basis") is very aware of the sort of social ostracism that can go on: "Coming out of a refuge, you're not respectable any more. As a free woman, you must be having men round all the time — you become the local prostitute, and you have to face the whole thing of not being acceptable socially. And then your child's behaviour isn't accepted because he's been affected by the experience. People judge you for that — that's what comes of leaving the family, and so on."

Apart from this stigma, of course, there's the original battering to contend with. "It's a very shaming thing," says Agnes. "It makes you feel like the lowest of the low." But even so, "I'd hate to think my daughters were ashamed. If anyone battered them, I'd batter him. I'd get the courage."

Lack of alternatives

Why, then, do women stay with their husbands in that situation? Why don't they tell someone? "It's fear that stops you," says Agnes. "I was too frightened not to stay with him all these years. My husband's family knew he was battering me. His mother would phone him if I went there and he'd come round and beat me. His five sisters and his mother were all frightened of him, terrified of him. His brothers beat his mother up the night of his father's funeral, fighting over money. She was taken into hospital that night, 73 years old. She didn't tell anyone, either."

And then there's the question of alternatives, or rather the lack of them. Jenny's husband told her that he'd have their two-year-old son taken away if she went into homeless accommodation, and she was unable to find a landlord who would take a small child. She talks now of "that sense of terror — 'Oh God, what's going to happen to me?'" and feels that it's "very much an economic and ideological thing. You're dependent on a good family set-up. To risk that failing . . . you risk social stigma and rejection, and where can you go?"

Adding to the feeling of helplessness is the strong suspicion that no-one is interested in what's happening to them. Agnes talks in these terms about a three-months' stay in hospital: "I was in hospital; my husband had broken my back. This doctor asked me if I'd been battered. He said it was terrible, wasn't there anyone I could turn to? I said I couldn't go to my own doctor because he was my husband's doctor. I would have committed suicide after just talking to that doctor. Yet the hospital doctor never offered any help. He didn't say anything about a refuge. He didn't even ask me if I was away from my husband."

Similarly, when Chris visited her doctor, worried about her outbursts of temper at the refuge, she was told that "the refuge affected different people in different ways." A few more minutes of the doctor's time would have drawn forth the information that she was also suffering from strong feelings of hatred towards her husband, feelings which disappeared when she left the refuge, along with her violence. She now feels "calm . . . as though I can sit and talk things out with people", while her attitude towards her husband is one of neutrality: "the hate's gone and I feel nothing, I don't feel as though I've ever been married to him or as though they're his kids." Perhaps she would have 'calmed down' a lot sooner, if someone had taken the trouble to investigate the connection.

"All men are tarred with the same brush"

In an odd arrangement designed to stop her daughters from feeling lonely while she's on night shift, Agnes' husband stays at her flat overnight from Monday to Friday. But there's no love lost between them: "He's changed, but I don't trust him. He's never lifted his hands again to me, but I don't trust him. I'm always there first if I see him starting something." All men, for her, are tarred with the same brush: "I wouldn't let another

man near my door. I wouldn't trust him", while her daughters, with the exception of the fifteen-year-old who is herself very violent, are all afraid of men. The eldest daughter especially "won't go outside the door. She's terrified of men. All the rest are very timid. Some man's only got to raise his voice and they're away."

At this point some people might conclude simply that these women are, to a large extent, isolated and unhappy, and close the record there. Certainly, there is plenty of evidence to show that they *could* be: there is Agnes' and her daughters' mistrust of men, and her feelings of shame about the years of battering; there is Chris's depression, her angry rejection of sympathy and fear of the dark; and there is Jenny's struggle with appalling housing conditions.

"It takes courage to break away"

But in spite of all this the three women share a view of themselves and their futures which is strikingly confident and optimistic. They all emphasise one thing which is hardly ever taken into account in the welter of academic writings on this subject. "It needs courage to break away from your home after all these years, especially if you've got a family," points out Agnes. "It takes courage to lift the phone." And Jenny says "Women have already had to think for themselves, to even get to a refuge. They're not helpless, driven, beaten-down women."

And they have developed particular strengths since then.

"I feel very vulnerable, easily hurt, but also strong," says Jenny. "I've become much stronger, much less conventional, in the sense that I've been forced to communicate with women at a very deep level very quickly." Chris thinks that she's changed — "I can stand up for myself a lot better. I'm more outspoken than I've ever been. I can see different people's lives more quickly, understand them better. I've got more time for people, as well."

Peace of mind

For Agnes, "the greatest thing is having peace of mind. To put your head on a pillow and know you're there for the night. To be able to lock your door. It's not lonely. You know you're safe. My kids used to be in the street with me at all hours of the night, sleeping under trees, in the park. It's the greatest thing that can happen to a woman who comes to a refuge, and it costs nothing."

Chris, too, stresses that. "I don't feel lonely. I don't miss having a man around. I've got the peace of mind, not waiting for him to come in drunk, waiting for the key to turn in the lock, not living in fear." Jenny speaks also of another kind of freedom: "I can do some writing, or real thinking, or reading. I get much more sense of self-value, I rediscover my confidence, I get mental energy. My husband would never let me do anything; he felt threatened. Most of my time was spent getting away from him."

All three women see their future in positive terms. "I used to sit and worry about my future, but now I just take the days as they come," says Chris. And for Agnes the way forward is simply "to go on doing what I'm doing, to help others the way I've been helped. I'd like to see all the social workers out and the battered women in. I get the biggest pleasure out of helping the other women."

Jenny, on the point of moving to a far better house next door to her closest friend from the refuge, is particularly optimistic. "I feel I've come through the worst. I've had to learn to cope with problems on my own, I've learnt how to deal with my child, with welfare agencies. I know where I'm going and what I want to do. I almost never get depressed."

(There is always a difficult period of adjustment when women first leave a Women's Aid Refuge and start living on their own. If you feel that you could spare some time, either for practical things like baby-sitting or just to keep someone company, or if you feel that your Women's Group might be able to welcome some new members in their area, please contact The National Women's Aid Federation, 51 Chalcot Road, London NW1, telephone 01-586 0104/5192. They'll be able to put you in touch with your local refuge.)

Equal Opportunities Commission
20 Grosvenor Hill
London W1X 0HX

Telephone 01-629 8213



Your reference

Our reference: BL/FK

Date 12 August 1976

Dear Sir

The Equal Opportunities Commission was set up, under the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975, with the duties of working towards the elimination of discrimination and of promoting equality of opportunity between men and women generally. It has the further duty (S. 55*) of keeping under review, in consultation with the Health and Safety Commission, certain provisions of health and safety legislation which require males and females (ie. of all age) to be treated differently. Arising out of commitments given by the Government during the passage of the Sex Discrimination Bill through Parliament, the Secretary of State for Employment has now required the Commission to report, with recommendations, on all the provisions concerned by the end of 1978.

The Equal Opportunities Commission will, of course, refer to the previous debates on the subject, and, in relation to hours of work, particularly the 1969 report** of the NJAC Working Party. But a new situation has been created by the obligation placed on the Equal Opportunities Commission to review the protective legislation as it applies to women. The Commission therefore proposes to approach the subject afresh, taking as its guiding principle the need to examine the possibilities of removing outdated and unsuitable provisions or of extending to both sexes those provisions which afford genuine and necessary protection on health, safety and welfare grounds.

It is in this context, therefore, that I am writing to invite you to submit evidence on protective legislation to the Commission. The Commission will focus initially on the provisions in Part VI of the Factories Act 1961, and associated legislation, which restrict the hours of work of women aged 18 and over (and young persons) employed in industrial undertakings. The review will not, however, be restricted to the hours of work provisions, and the Commission would welcome your views on any other provisions of health and safety legislation which require males and females to be treated differently.

The Commission is inviting detailed evidence on the current working of the legislation, and for proposals on ways in which men and women could be treated equally, with some discussion of the likely implications of any amendments or the justification of treating one sex differently from the other. I should also be pleased to receive any other suggestions you wish to make about the way our review should proceed - we may, for example, decide to conduct a national attitude survey.

I should be grateful if you would let me have your evidence by 12 November 1976.

It should be addressed to:-

Secretary to Protective Legislation Committee
Equal Opportunities Commission
Commission House
20 Grosvenor Hill
London W1

The Secretary will also be pleased to supply any further information you require on the subject. At a later date the Commission may wish to take oral evidence from certain organisations to supplement their written submissions.

Yours sincerely

Betty Lockwood

(94713)

From the Equal Opportunities Commission sent to Spare Rib

PLEASE NOTE

NO JUNIORS (except on Sundays)
LADIES during International matches
BARE TORSOES ever

One leg-pull - or maybe it wasn't. Met a professional who was trying hard to solve the problem of photographing elderly women. He reckoned that if you photographed the woman in an almost upside down position the bags under the eyes and the crow's feet would be less evident. He is thinking of getting one of those long dentist's chairs and tilting it well! Try it out and send us the results. We'll publish one or two of the best ones.

From Kodak Professional Notes No 14.
Sent in by Valerie Wilmer, London SW12

PLEASE KEEP SENDING
SEXIST CUTTINGS, PHOTOS, QUOTES,
AND ADVERTISEMENTS TO
'TOOTH & NAIL',
INCLUDING ALL DETAILS
WHICH MAY BE NEEDED
BY PEOPLE WANTING TO FIGHT BACK.

Tooth & Nail

Dear Spare Rib,

I thought you might be interested in a few sexist gems I came across while leafing through a textbook written by an illustrious Professor of Gynaecology.

1. It is a pity that every father, husband, brother and anyone else concerned with the bringing up of girls can't be a gynaecologist.
2. When performing a vaginal examination be careful not to withdraw the finger too quickly, in case erotic stimulation is caused.
3. From a general chapter on sex and marriage: Males are attracted to females by their shape, way of dressing and talking and mental attributes. Females are attracted to males by their virility and manliness.

Yours sincerely
Elizabeth Cunningham,
Foley Street,
London W1.

Sign at the Oval cricket ground, Kennington, London. Photo by Irving Teitelbaum.

Sent in by Elizabeth Cunningham, London

reviews

MUSIC

Patti Smith does five British gigs this month as part of a three week European tour. Her debut album and concerts earlier this year won her acclaim — 'The first real rock'n'roll woman', 'The queen of rock'n'roll', 'The wild mustang of American rock'. Others saw her as an out and out con, some still aren't sure.

She is a mass of contradictions; utterly image conscious yet fighting against being labelled. One moment impressively referring to Rimbaud, Burroughs, Genet, Artaud and the next trying to convince us that the universal language of rock'n'roll will save the world. A revolutionary who wears a union jack T-shirt for her encore.

On stage she is powerful and excitingly new but her rock antics don't always ring true, especially her use of guitar as merely a noise-making machine. She's ambitious, 'We wanna be really big in rock'n'roll, we want to be an important part of that family tree.' She appears to have explored every possible media/art form and started early: 'As far as God, UFO's and rock'n'roll — I was there when I was six'. Jagger is her number one hero. His influence is apparent. Does she want to be his female equivalent?

She may break new ground for women in rock'n'roll but that doesn't appear to be a conscious intention. 'I've always been free . . . I don't have to prove it by joining any movement'. But she has chosen to be part of the rock'n'roll movement with all its sexist/commercial/political connotations.

Her two London gigs will be at the Hammersmith Odeon, a venue snubbed on her last visit, in favour of the more intimate Roundhouse. The support group is the same as last time. Go late, for God's sake, they are loathsome. The dates are: Friday 22nd October — London Hammersmith Odeon; Saturday 23rd October — London Hammersmith Odeon; Sunday 24th October — Birmingham Odeon; Thursday 28th October — Manchester Free Trade Hall;



PATTI SMITH

Friday 29th October — Edinburgh Odeon. Ticket prices are £2, £1.50 and £1, except in London where they are £2.50, £2 and £1.50. Her next album, soon to be released, is tentatively titled 'Radio Ethiopia'.

Marion Fudger

PLAYS

WHO KILLED FISH?

The opening of the Edinburgh Wax Museum in April has done more than give people the chance to visit the famous in effigy. The first floor of the building will be the base for the Scottish Women's Company, which was launched at this year's Edinburgh Festival by its two directors, playwright Pam Gems and Scottish actress Maggie Jordan. Pam Gems' husband's company set up the museum, and she herself worked on it for over a year in order to finance the first productions, her own new plays, *Dead Fish* and *Guinevere*.

The Company like the London based Women's company aims to correct the male-

dominated bias throughout the theatre industry — "to assist and encourage women writers, directors, actresses and designers". Even though the London Women's Company have put on a number of plays they were never given an Arts Council grant and don't have a permanent base. Having a building in Edinburgh may make it easier for the Scottish company. Obviously it will take some time to hammer out a developing policy and body of work. For an important reaction to this first venture see the news section.

Guinevere is an updated duologue between King Arthur and his wife, Guinevere, who is on trial for her life for adultery. The play uses a historical theme to peg both the double standard in the legendary past and a quite modern discussion of feminist ideas. *Dead Fish* is a more challenging piece because its subject is totally modern. Four girls share a flat owned by one of them, Fish, a middle class girl fighting for the proletarian cause. The others are Dusa, an old friend (they used to be in the same women's group) staying over while her divorce case is heard;

Stass, an ebullient hospital worker striving to achieve her ambition to study marine biology by also being a high class whore; and Skin, a food faddist, into yoga and dope, a hippie freak. At one level the play is very taut and acute, a slice of hermetic female life — independent girls sharing a flat. The four lives, quite separate in the outside world, come together here, in friendship and witty solidarity. However the play is much more than a celebration of female friendship. All four lives move on as we watch: Dusa's children are kidnapped by her former husband, then after a chase sent back to her; Stass finally has enough money to buy her ticket to Hawaii, Skin comes down to earth, begins eating properly and gets a job; and Fish, the frenzied political activist, cannot cope with the fact that the man she loves has left her, and commits suicide.

The play is problematic because it's not clear how we are meant to interpret Fish's suicide. The other women's lives progress, Fish's stops (the discovery of her suicide ends the play, in a moment of delicately written poise). But why is it that she, the political activist, cannot cope with her personal life when the other three can? The four lives are juxtaposed, and however important their relationships with each other are, each has her own thing: Dusa has her kids, to whom she is devoted, Stass her studies, Skin her fads, Fish her politics. The trouble is that Fish's politics are very opaque; we see her briefly spotlighted, telling a meeting how Rosa Luxembourg extolled the 'spontaneous' 'organisation' of the workers; this, she says is what she's for. She is also meant to be a feminist, although we have no clear idea how this relates to her socialism, or her life, or to the lives of the other women. She is desperately hooked on a man who's left her, unlike the other women, who are all emotionally quite independent of men, indeed seem hardly concerned with them. We are back to the original question, but with the additional irony that of all four it is the political activist who is the most conventionally romantic.

Without any first hand evidence of either the man Fish

loves or her political life, we are left with a totally unexplored contradiction — a feminist socialist pushed to suicide. Is the message — the apolitical and amoral survive? Fish is middle class, but if the indictment is meant to be a certain kind of middle class radicalism, then the play fails to make its case. (Pam Gems has dealt far more effectively with such a theme in her play *The Project*, shown at the Soho Poly in London earlier this year). Its incompleteness makes it come across simply as a generalised indictment of political activism. If, on the other hand, it is meant to show that political activism has little effect on a woman's personal life then again the case is not made out. Partly this is because we can't see what her feminism consists of, and partly because the choice of any political subject matter is a loaded choice. While it's important to show the shortcomings of some kinds of politics, it's also necessary to show why they are shortcomings. This play tries to shortcut its argument, by simply juxtaposing and asserting Fish's life against the other women's — kids, ambitions, fads needn't kill you, but politics may; the message is in danger of over-indicting politics and curiously trivialising it at the same time. Fish's activism becomes as individualistic as Skin's brown rice fad, and her dilemma — that she wants to change the world but can't change her own feelings of dependence on a man is not clearly explored.

Finally, back to the Company. Maggie Jordan is anxious for any Scottish women working in the theatre 'down south' to come back and help form the company. Kundry's Theatre will be able to put on other activities as well as plays, and plan to have a creche. If you're interested, contact Maggie Jordan, c/o Kundry's Theatre, 142 High Street, Edinburgh.

Micheline Wandor

A reworked version of the play now called "Dusa, Fish, Stass and Vi" directed by Nancy Meckler will be at The Hampstead Theatre Swiss Cottage Centre, London NW3, in early December

SON OF A GUN by John Burrows Sidewalk Theatre Company

The story of Brenda, the heroine of *Sidewalk Theatre Company's* new play, is the story of the women's movement over the last twenty years — a movement through acceptance and questioning to rejection.

At age nine, Brenda is taken to a child psychologist because she is maladjusted — "naughty" as her mother puts it. Brenda is naughty because she wants to be a boy. Society helps her become "normal".

She moves through familiar scenes — school; the local folk club; a CND march. We follow her through abortion, marriage, her relationship with a transvestite man, her stumbling advances to women, and her sexual fulfillment as a lesbian. With her growing awareness comes a painful recognition of the inequalities of society reflected in sexual inequalities. The awakening is the more moving, and the more convincing, because it is uneven.

The play grew out of a series of discussions and improvisations between all the members of the Company, based on personal experiences. John Burrows taped the discussions and formulated them into a play. It is an impressive achievement. While Brenda (Natacha Fairbanks) grows from experience to experience, the others play a host of characters and stereotypes that collectively make up the society that has shaped her. Yet there is a strict formality to the play.



Brenda moves full circle from the girl who, wanting to be a boy, is rejected, to the homosexual who rejects.

Shifting from comedy to pathos, from glib throw-away lines to preaching to polemics and back, the play culminates in a stunning routine, played out by two women. One, the bridegroom, carries a toy cash register. The other, in a pink ballet dress and looking slightly tired, dances the woman's role. To the ringing of the cash register she mimes her housework, the baby, the cooking, the preening, and then the drinking and pill-popping until the dance is done. The effect is shattering.

Sally Feldman

Son of a Gun is available for bookings. For further information contact: Marion Pike, Sidewalk Theatre Company, c/o The Factory, 107-111 Matthias Road, London N16 01-249 3066/01-624 7695.

BOOKS



MICHAEL ANN MULLEN

Ahem ..

Annie Green talks to Grunwick strikers; Ruth Hall and Mary Davis debate Wages for Housework; Zoe Fairbairn provides the economics; Lyn Gambles examines Campaign history; Karen Margolis views the all-male medical world; Elena Erlich reviews new abortion book; Dorothy Jones talks to Nancy McKeith about women's self-health. OK for starters?

35p from good shops or
subs from 155a Drummond
Street London NW1.

Next issue soon.

**the
Leveller**

BOOKS for children

THE STREET THAT DISAPPEARED

by Harriet Graham
(Deutsch, £2.50)

PHILIP HALL LIKES ME. I RECKON MAYBE

by Bette Greene
(Hamish Hamilton, £2.95)

JULIE OF THE WOLVES

by Jean Craighead George
(Hamish Hamilton /
Puffin, 45p.)

The property developer has recently joined the ranks of children's book villains among wolves, step-mothers, one-legged pirates etc. In Harriet Graham's topical story *The Street That Disappeared* it is the council that wants to 'develop' an old Mews which is the only place that children have to play in. Opposition to the demolition plans is initiated by Evvie, a local girl, who though not 'particularly clever' is prone to having 'ideas', and putting them into practice.

While it's good to find a story for 8-11s about a positive and courageous girl, Graham's urban working class setting is strangely dated — we are told that Londoner Evvie is not going to 'win any scholarships' (to a comprehensive?). Working class speech is not just a matter of 'bloomings' and 'blimeys'. The eldest of four, Evvie is the 'little mother' who has to help look after the youngest. Fair enough, but would a real life Evvie be quite so indulgent to brother Chris' complete domestic incompetence?

Another book with a positive girl as central character is *Philip*



"The Darned Club, Thursday, October 29, 1891"

This photograph by Alice Austen comes from the catalogue of the "Women of Photography" exhibition organised by the San Francisco Museum of Art, with one photograph by each of fifty women, from Julia Margaret Cameron to Marcia Resnick, over the last hundred years.

Seeing a solitary example of a woman's photography is frustratingly like looking at her work through a keyhole but a useful bibliography and biographical notes are provided. We're told that Alice Austen was born in 1899 "to a wealthy family on Staten Island, New York, and adopted photography as a hobby late in life". She lost all her money in the crash of 1929 and ended up in the local poor house. Then the Staten Island Historical Society found her negatives and sold prints to a number of publications. On the proceeds she moved to a private nursing home where she died in 1952.

The introduction places women within the history of photography and reveals where they slipped out of it. Take the case of Anna Atkins. From 1843 to 1851 she compiled photographs of seaweeds and pond scum into three volumes titled "British Algae". She modestly signed the work A.A. and was known everafter as "Anonymous Amateur".

It's good to see her work recognised but it would be interesting to know how she learned photography. Why did women like her gain access to photography? Why were women admitted to the Royal Photographic Society in 1853 while still being banned from the Royal Academy Fine Art Schools? The catalogue suggests that women who succeeded in photography were simply tough, eccentric or both, but a more convincing explanation is that until recently photography was not taken seriously as an art form.

The show wasn't intended to reveal a common attitude amongst women photographers. "Women see like people. Their work is recognisable within the framework of the imagery of their own time". True, but would a man have seen "The Darned Club" as Alice Austen did?

A limited supply available on mail order from Anthony Stokes,
11 Lady Somerset Road, London. £6.50 inc. p+p.





JOHN CLAXTON

All in a Day is a new series of photograph picture books for children. In the second title, *The Milk Run*, Andrew and Eve (two small children) go to see how milk is produced and distributed. The children's spontaneous interest is vividly caught amid personnel and machinery. The excellent black and white photographs strike a fine visual balance between the details of the productive processes and the story of the kids. The text is informative and unpatronisingly conveys the children's excitement. Eve and Andrew are seen doing all the same things; if anything Eve is the more positive. Recommended for young children up to Junior school.

Andrew Mann

Hall Like Me. I Reckon Maybe which is certain to appeal for its striking cover illustration of Beth Lambert, the young black heroine from Arkansas. The inside doesn't disappoint either. Beth is the "second-best arithmetic solver, the second-best speller and the second-best reader in Miss Johnson's class" and she adores Philip Hall who is "number-one best at everything" — but is it because Beth lets him? Beth decides not to compromise any more and she and Philip become at last real partners — "win together or lose together".

Greene writes well for the 8-11s about themselves, about relationships, home, school, gangs etc. and she provides a rich portrait of agricultural life in Arkansas. Also, at least to me, a white unfamiliar with the context of this novel, it seems that Greene writes with knowledge and feeling for the black experience. (Is this true, can readers comment on this?) Fine illustrations from Charles Lilly throughout. First published in the USA.

For older readers *Julie of*

the Wolves is the story of Julie's, or Miyax's as her Eskimo name is, epic journey across the Alaskan tundra to escape from her child husband. Miyax survives because like all Eskimoes of the old school she "truly understands the earth", and she dares to seek help from the wolves so that she will not starve to death. *Julie of the Wolves* is an intensely moving book that conveys the skills and culture of the old Eskimo ways while at the same time showing how even Miyax must in the end embrace the gussack (white) way of life with its planes, guns, alcohol and tourists. Miyax must become Julie. First published here in 1973 and now very welcome in paperback.

Rosemary Stones
(Children's Rights Workshop)

NEWS COPY DATES
For *Spare Rib* 53—Oct 14.
For *Spare Rib* 54—Nov 11.
(If it's urgent, it's worth trying after these dates.)

FILM

MOTHER, JUGS & SPEED (Fox Rank)

This is the entertaining struggle of a decaying ambulance company in downtown Los Angeles, with a lot of good women's lines and a lot of good laughs; yet it's often too real to be skittish and too skittish to be real. One moment you're in a traditionally comic scene culminating in a downhill race of an immense injured woman on a runaway stretcher; the next scene ends in sudden and horrifying death. And mixed with all this is a lot about women's liberation in a very real and understanding way.

With the incidental women portrayed realistically, and sexist male actions filmed so as to show up the men's crudity, there is nothing offensively sexist in the film. Raquel Welch as *Jugs* really gets into the part of a very straight switchboard operator — who suddenly appears in the boss's office waving her driving qualifications. "Get back to your switchboard. All we need now is a woman driver!" he shouts. So she threatens to sue and . . .

It doesn't fall down over romance, either: Raquel and Harvey Keitel, as *Speed*, tumble very naturally into the ambulance sheets after an adventure, as the sun sets over the sea. For sure they'll be a liberated couple; he is a very liberated man. And when *Jugs* is upset over a death in her ambulance she's not kicked out. Instead *Mother* (Bill Cosby) gives her a sermon: stick with the responsibility she asked for. She's been accepted.

But there's something wrong with all this. How come all these nice liberated people are working in a sleazy run-down ambulance company? What woman, apart from a movie star would emerge from a switchboard in such a compelling way? And a set of stereotypes have been created to extend, a little, the limited repertoire of the modern comedy. *Mother, Jugs & Speed* has no real sting.

This apart, the movie does prove you don't have to be sexist to be funny. Its main fault lies in its lack of pace; on the other hand Bill Cosby's acting, which is a treat, holds it together. And with no dumb blondes you don't have to struggle with your feelings before you laugh!

Clare Cherrington



FOX-RANK



o-u-t spells out

She arrived one day to live across the street from us. I watched her from the window.

"Mum, a new girl's come to live in our road. Shall I go and ask her to play with me?"

"Leave it a couple of days, Brenda, give them a chance to settle in". I watched her with my nose pressed against the glass. But I didn't wait. Creeping shyly out of our flat, I knocked on her front door.

"Do you want to come out and play with me? I've got a new skipping rope . . ." That's how we

met. Skipping:

*"A house TO let
no rent TO pay
knock at THE door
and run Away".*

We saw each other every day. On the way to school, and on the way back. When she was ill I dragged myself there alone, I didn't want to go without her. She was a year older than me, with green eyes and goofy teeth and wispy brown hair. We trailed off to school, kicking leaves and climbing walls. I was scared and she laughed at me. "Scaredy cat, scaredy cat". So I tried harder, until I could skip along the tops. We were often late, and on the way home we used to stop at a cafe and spend our pocket money on cups of strong tea and pretend we had husbands and children and had to make do on £11 a week.

A short story by Stef Pixner

One day she was ill and couldn't go to school. So I pretended I was ill too. Mum went out to buy blackcurrant juice and paraffin for me, but I thought she'd gone out to work. So I rolled up my pyjama bottoms, pulled on a skirt and jumper, and went over the road. We'd been playing for a couple of hours when there was a heavy banging at the door. It was Mum, her eyes red from crying. She thought I'd been carried off and she was just about to phone the police. She dragged me out by the arm and slammed the door. She dumped me into bed and went off to work and I sat in the dark as a kind of penance. After that I wasn't allowed to see Pat for several weeks. I did of course. There was no way of stopping me. We swore we'd be friends for ever, and that in a year or two we'd run away from home and travel round the world, working our passage, or as stow-aways.

Some months after that incident had blown over, I stayed the night at her flat. It was exciting, and we talked and giggled till late into the night. Her mother kept shouting at us to be quiet or I wouldn't be allowed to stay there again. So I got into her bed and we whispered and buried ourselves under the bedclothes so her Mum couldn't hear when we exploded with laughter. When it was very late we did quieten down. We were trying to keep each other awake; she was blowing in my ear, and I was tickling her feet. Then we hugged each other.

"You're my best friend", I said.

"So're you", she replied. My heart was beating and I felt funny. I pressed myself against her and she responded by holding me tight.

"Promise you'll never tell anyone", I said.

"Promise".

We just lay there, pressing tight against each other with our hearts beating like mad.

The summer after that we went away at different times in the holidays. We wrote often at first, about everything that was in our hearts. But towards the end of the summer she didn't write much. I just counted the days till she got back. But when she did get back, something had changed. She was different. I rushed over to see her as soon as I could but she was snooty and cool. I stayed and stayed trying to think of the right thing to say, until I heard mum calling me, and I slunk off home. I tried again a few more times, and I asked her what had happened, but she was superior and sarcastic and laughed at the things we'd shared and made me feel a fool. She didn't want to climb walls anymore and she gave her mice and goldfish away. She started wearing nylons and lipstick and reading grownup novels. She didn't want to go to school with me in the mornings because, she said, I made her late. She was writing to someone. I know because I saw her post the letters and I

watched her wait for the postman in the mornings. I wished I was dead. Or rather I liked to imagine my death like in a film. I would get ill and waste away and she would finally come and see me when it was too late. Or, my eyes blurred with tears, I would have an accident. Then she'd be sorry. Then she'd remember our love.

But the months passed, and I found other friends. It wasn't the same, but things weren't so painful any more. I stopped watching her front door hour after hour with my nose pressed against the glass. We even began to say hello again when we saw each other in the street. And then I heard from Mum that she was leaving London, she was going away with her family to live in another town. I waited for the next holidays to come, and then creeping shyly across the road, I knocked on her door.

She answered with a straight face and let me in. We began to talk a bit, awkwardly. We played some records, and she gave me my first cigarette. We talked about boys. She'd stopped writing to the boy she met on holiday. She said he was boring and she couldn't remember what he looked like anymore. Anyway there were several more she had in mind.

"How about you?" she asked me.

"Oh, lots" I lied, just watching her, just wanting.

"I've got new clothes to go away with" she said. "Come and see".

So I went into her room again and we sat down on the pink candlewick bedspread. We didn't say a word, though sentences came into my mind and I rehearsed them, trying to make them sound natural. I could see us reflected in the big mirror which stood on her chest of drawers. There were little glass animals in front of it on a lace mat, and pictures from magazines stuck on the walls. Past the mirror and the net curtains was the street. The silence went on and on. In the end, I reached out my hand. She was still at first, but then she leaned over and laid her head on my shoulder. We stayed like that for a long time, and although her hair was tickling my chin, I didn't dare to push it away. Then I hugged her tightly, my heart thumping like before, and my hands sweating. I pulled myself away.

"I've got to go now", I said. "Promise you'll write".

"Yes" she said. But she never did.

*dip dip dip
my little ship
sails across the water
like a cup and saucer
O-U-T spells OUT.*

**Josette Morgan, 9 Montague Road,
Hendon, London NW4.**

Visit, find out about, or help between 10.30 and 8 at Freights, 9 York Way, London N7. 485 3750.

TRICK [?] OR TREAT



YOU WON'T FIND YOURSELF BEING TRICKED BY SPARE RIB (BUT YOU WILL FIND OUT ABOUT A FEW TRICKS PLAYED ON WOMEN). TREATS? GIVE YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDS A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF SPARE RIBS!

"Trick or Treat?"

An American Halloween custom when children dress up and go knocking on people's doors calling "trick or treat?"

If no 'treat', sweets, fruit etc., is forthcoming the household gets a 'trick' played on it.

Spare Rib is researching witches, past and present, and would like to hear from anyone with any information.

TO: SPARE RIB SUBSCRIPTIONS, c/o LINDA PHILLIPS,
114 GEORGE STREET BERKHAMSTEAD, HERTS HP4 2EJ.

- ☐ Please send me Spare Rib for 1 year.
☐ I enclose cheque/PO for £ (see rates).

Make cheques/PO's payable to Spare Ribs Ltd.

NAME

ADDRESS

- ☐ Please send a 1 year Gift Subscription of Spare Rib.
☐ I enclose cheque/PO for £ (see rates).

NAME

ADDRESS

Gift card should read from

SPARE RIB SUBSCRIPTION RATES (FOR 1 YEAR):
UK & EUROPE - £4.44; ELSEWHERE SEAMAIL - \$12.00;
ELSEWHERE AIRMAIL - \$20.00.



COMING SOON!

**SELF-DEFENCE FOR
EVERY WOMAN**

**THE STORY
OF GLADYS FOX**

**EMPLOYMENT
AGENCY UNCOVERED**

**COMPULSIVE EATING
PART 2: BREAKING THE
ADDICTION**

**INTERVIEW WITH
DORA RUSSELL**

**THRUSH: A SELF HELP
APPROACH TO
TREATMENT
AND PREVENTION**



WHAT WOMEN NEED BUT COULDN'T GET TILL NOW

Whether you are single or engaged, married or divorced, legally separated, deserted or about to re-marry . . . whatever your situation 'WISP' will help.

What is 'WISP'?

Women's Individual Savings Plan.

A comprehensive insurance-savings plan, designed by women, solely for women, with only the interests of women in mind. Something which has never existed until now.

Before you change another typewriter ribbon, nappy or your mind, send or 'phone for the free 'WISP' booklet now. It answers all the questions you didn't know who or how to ask.

Send the coupon to:

Dorothy Genn

Langham Life Assurance Co Ltd

Langham House, Holmbrook Drive

London NW4 2NX.

Telephone: 01 203 5211

Please send me without obligation
a copy of your free WISP booklet

Name _____

Address _____

SR

Are you 17-30 ☐

31-45 over 45 ☐

Not applicable in Eire.



Women's Individual Savings Plan - it grows

Page	Title	Author	Rights
1	Women leaving a North London factory	Mullen, Michael Ann	Usage Terms: © Michael Ann Mullen
4	Letters		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for this item. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
5	Letters		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for this item. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
6	Fat Is A Feminist Issue	Parker, Rozsika	Usage Terms: © Rosie Parker (Rozsika Parker) (deceased)
6	food collage		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for food collage. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
7	Fat Is A Feminist Issue	Parker, Rozsika	Usage Terms: © Rosie Parker (Rozsika Parker) (deceased)
7	Susie Orbach	Greenhill, Sally	Usage Terms: © Sally Greenhill
8	Fat Is A Feminist Issue	Parker, Rozsika	Usage Terms: © Rosie Parker (Rozsika Parker) (deceased)
8	Susie Orbach	Greenhill, Sally	Usage Terms: © Sally Greenhill
9	Fat Is A Feminist Issue	Parker, Rozsika	Usage Terms: © Rosie Parker (Rozsika Parker) (deceased)
9	Susie Orbach	Greenhill, Sally	Usage Terms: © Sally Greenhill
10	"It's not like Asian ladies to answer back"	Wilson, Amrit	Usage Terms: © Amrit Wilson. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
10	Anti-National Front demonstration in Bradford	Evans, Dave	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Anti-National Front demonstration in Bradford. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
11	"It's not like Asian ladies to answer back"	Wilson, Amrit	Usage Terms: © Amrit Wilson. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
11	Women mourn at the demo which marked the funeral of Gurdip Chaggar	Sturrock, John	Usage Terms: © John Sturrock. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.

11	Young enthusiasts at a National Party rally in Plaistow	Sturrock, John	Usage Terms: © John Sturrock. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
12	"It's not like Asian ladies to answer back"	Wilson, Amrit	Usage Terms: © Amrit Wilson. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
12	Young asian contingent on anti-National Front	Sturrock, John	Usage Terms: © John Sturrock. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
13	"It's not like Asian ladies to answer back"	Wilson, Amrit	Usage Terms: © Amrit Wilson. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
13	End of a shift at a North London factory	Mullen, Michael Ann	Usage Terms: © Michael Ann Mullen
14	On the Road - Cardiff		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for On the Road - Cardiff. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
14	Information on WRCW		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Information on WRCW. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
16	Earthly Delights	Lynn	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Earthly Delights. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
16	Illustration		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Illustration. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
17	"Please don't ask to see the boss ..."	Bowman, Marion	Usage Terms: © Marion Bowman
17	Angela Cooper	Snail Graphics	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Angela Cooper. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
17	Sheila Johnson and Luchia Fitzgerald	Snail Graphics	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Sheila Johnson and Luchia Fitzgerald. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.

18	"Please don't ask to see the boss ..."	Bowman, Marion	Usage Terms: © Marion Bowman
18	Trico's: Christmas on the pavement?	Nicholls, Jill	Usage Terms: © Jill Nicholls
18	Voting down management's latest offer	Davies, Chris	Usage Terms: © Chris Davies (enquiries@arenapal.com). This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
19	"Women are not popular with the public"		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for "Women are not popular with the public". Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
19	Unofficially Unequal		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Unofficially Unequal . Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
20	Easy Motions at the TUC	Cherrington, Clare	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Easy Motions at the TUC. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
20	Pat Turner	Davies, Chris	Usage Terms: © Chris Davies (enquiries@arenapal.com). This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
20	Margaret Morrison	Davies, Chris	Usage Terms: © Chris Davies (enquiries@arenapal.com). This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
20	Helen Gallacher	Davies, Chris	Usage Terms: © Chris Davies (enquiries@arenapal.com). This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
21	Work: a right to fight for?	Brackx, Anny	Usage Terms: © Anny Brackx. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
21	The banner that passed the censors	Sturrock, John	Usage Terms: © John Sturrock. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You

			may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
21	Mine's a Babycham		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Mine's a Babycham. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	Cartoon	Preston	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Cartoon. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	Waiting for the State		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Waiting for the State. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
22	The Sensitive Kerb-crawler and the Common Prostitute	Green, Victoria	Usage Terms: © Victoria Green
22	Who'll help you get an abortion?	Markman, Stephanie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Who'll help you get an abortion?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	East London hospital workers		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for East London hospital workers. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Striking against the cuts	Davies, Chris	Usage Terms: © Chris Davies (enquiries@arenapal.com). This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
23	Into the gents		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Into the gents. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Crippling Assembly Line		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Crippling Assembly Line. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Drowning Their Laughter		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Drowning Their Laughter. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	West London St Charles Hospital nurses petitioning		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for West London St Charles Hospital nurses petitioning. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.

23	West London St Charles Hospital nurses petitioning	Big Flame Photos	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for West London St Charles Hospital nurses petitioning. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
24	Short List		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for this item. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
25	Vindicacion Feminist	Tamarit, Begonia	Usage Terms: © Begonia Tamarit
25	Battered Woman pamphlet	Markman, Stephanie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Battered Woman pamphlet. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
26	Mairead Corrigan	Bowie, Derek	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Mairead Corrigan. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
27	Army raid in the Ardoyne	Bowie, Derek	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Army raid in the Ardoyne. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	Colombia: Botched up Abortion		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Colombia: Botched up Abortion. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	women in Colombia	Bright, Sara; Carrizosa, Eulalia	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for women in Colombia. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	In A Spanish Jail	McNeill, Sandra	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for In A Spanish Jail. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
29	In A Spanish Jail	McNeill, Sandra	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for In A Spanish Jail. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
29	Jam In Holland	Campbell, Bea	Usage Terms: © Beatrix Campbell. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
29	Celebrating in an Amsterdam park		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Celebrating in an Amsterdam park. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have

			regarding this item.
29	Feminist Theatre?	Edinburgh Women's Liberation	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Feminist Theatre?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
33	"I work with such passion it shuts out everything else"	Perry, Gillian	Usage Terms: © Gillian Perry. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
34	"I work with such passion it shuts out everything else"	Perry, Gillian	Usage Terms: © Gillian Perry. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
35	"I work with such passion it shuts out everything else"	Perry, Gillian	Usage Terms: © Gillian Perry. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
36	Three Battered Women Face the Future	Markman, Stephanie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Three Battered Women Face the Future. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
36	Jenny and her son		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Jenny and her son. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
37	Three Battered Women Face the Future	Markman, Stephanie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Three Battered Women Face the Future. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
38	Three Battered Women Face the Future	Markman, Stephanie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Three Battered Women Face the Future. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
39	Tooth & Nail		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for this item. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
40	Patti Smith	Fudger, Marion	Usage Terms: © (now) Marion Gilbert
40	Patti Smith		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Patti Smith. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information

			you have regarding this item.
40	Who Killed Fish?	Wandor, Michelene	Usage Terms: © Michelene Wandor
41	Who Killed Fish?	Wandor, Michelene	Usage Terms: © Michelene Wandor
41	Son of a Gun	Feldman, Sally	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Son of a Gun. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
41	Charlotte Wolff	Mullen, Michael Ann	Usage Terms: © Michael Ann Mullen
42	Women and Photography		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Women and Photography. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
42	The Street That Disappeared	Stones, Rosemary	Usage Terms: © Rosemary Stones. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
42	Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon Maybe	Stones, Rosemary	Usage Terms: © Rosemary Stones. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
42	Julie of the Wolves	Stones, Rosemary	Usage Terms: © Rosemary Stones. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
43	All In A Day	Mann, Andrew	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for All In A Day. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
43	Mother, Jugs & Speed	Cherrington, Clare	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Mother, Jugs & Speed. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
43	Mother, Jugs & Speed		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Mother, Jugs & Speed. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
44	O-u-t spells out	Pixner, Stef	Usage Terms: © Stef Pixner
44	Illustration		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Illustration. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
45	O-u-t spells out	Pixner, Stef	Usage Terms: © Stef Pixner

46	Jaws and friend	Saville, Frances	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Jaws and friend. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
----	-----------------	------------------	---